

Traits of the Soul

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Achieve Noble Character

Traits of the Soul

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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 order to Achieve Noble Character it is important for muslims to remove any negative traits they possess from their character. Therefore, this short book will briefly discuss some negative traits and their treatments.

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.

Traits of the Soul

Persisting on Sins

The first negative trait of the soul is when one performs voluntary good deeds yet, persists on sins without sincerely repenting. It is important for muslims not to underestimate the effect of sins even the minor ones. They should remember that mountains are made up of small stones.

In addition, it is more important to abandon sins then to perform voluntary deeds. Therefore, muslims should concentrate on abandoning sins while fulfilling the obligatory deeds then follow this up by performing voluntary deeds. This will cause them to become a beloved of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Obeying People

The next negative trait is obeying people in things which lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A person behaves in this way as they believe other people can somehow grant them a benefit or protect them from some harm. In reality, the only One who can give a person this is Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim obeys people and disobeys Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will turn the people against them and not protect them from their negative effects. But if someone obeys Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from their negative effects even if this protection is not obvious to them. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 107:

“And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him; and if He intends for you good, then there is no repeller of His bounty. He causes it to reach whom He wills of His servants...”

A muslim must understand that people are completely dependent on Allah, the Exalted. In reality, the one who is not self-sufficient is incapable of fulfilling the needs of others. Allah, the Exalted, only uses some people to fulfil the needs of others but the source of the blessings is only Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if one obeys the Source, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, they will always gain support but if they disobey the Source they will not gain any benefit from another who themselves is in need of support from Allah, the Exalted. This is like a lost traveller seeking directions from another lost traveller. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 175:

“...So fear them not, but fear Me...”

Laziness

The next negative trait of the soul is when one becomes lazy and turns away from the voluntary righteous deeds they used to do. It is worse when a muslim is unconcerned with this behaviour. Greater than this is when a muslim is not even aware of their lazy behaviour because of their heedlessness. The worse is when one believes they are striving hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they have only become lazier. This can occur when a muslim does not show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the knowledge, strength, inspiration and opportunity to perform righteous deeds. A lack of gratitude can cause the blessings to be taken away which leads to laziness. One must ensure they show gratitude by using the blessings given to them as prescribed by Allah, the Exalted, so that they are given further blessings which will prevent them from laziness. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Physical laziness can be caused by over eating and drinking. When one over eats it strengthens their desires which causes one to become lazy in acts of obedience. One should therefore follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by avoiding over eating. This will benefit them in their physical and spiritual health. Avoiding over eating weakens the desires which in turn removes laziness. In fact, if a muslim follows the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, it will prevent laziness and protect them from many illnesses of the body. That is to split the

stomach into three parts. One part should be filled with food, one third with water and the remaining third should be left empty. This can be achieved by stopping oneself from eating or drinking before reaching their full. A person's laziness can also be cured by constantly reminding themselves of how limited their time is. If one does not make use of their time they will leave this world empty handed and with great regret. This thought can inspire one to stop being lazy and strive in righteous deeds.

Joy in Obedience

Another negative trait of the soul is when one performs religious duties without finding joy in them. This does not mean a person does not feel any difficulty as some physical duties, such as fasting, can be difficult. It means, after completing the deed they do not feel pleased at the fact they were given the strength to perform it. This can be caused by a lack of sincerity in one's intention. Therefore, muslims must strive to not only perform righteous deeds but more importantly perform them with the correct intention namely, to please, Allah, the Exalted.

Wishful Thinking

Another negative trait of the soul is when one expects salvation even though they do not behave obediently to Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is not hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, it is only wishful thinking. Real hope is when one uses the strength granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, to strive in His obedience and then hopes that Allah, the Exalted, accepts their efforts. Wishful thinking is when one puts no or minimal effort into obeying Allah, the Exalted, and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will save them. This is like the farmer who fails to plant seeds or water their fields and still hopes they will obtain a great harvest.

Rejecting the Truth

Among the negative traits of the soul is that it does not prefer the truth when it contradicts its desires. This can become worse when a person pursues all their desires especially, the unlawful ones. A muslim should therefore pursue only lawful desires and try their best to avoid unnecessary desires as it can cause them to fall in love with their desires. This love will prevent them from accepting the truth when it is presented to them if it contradicts their much loved desires. A muslim should always accept and act on the truth without paying any attention to their own opinion or feelings.

Bad Thoughts

Another negative trait of the soul is that a person enjoys thinking about things which are not praiseworthy in Islam. This occurs when a person becomes heedless to the fact that Allah, the Exalted, observes their inner thoughts just as He observes their outward actions. Chapter 50 Qaf, verse 16:

“And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him...”

This mentality is dangerous as it encourages one to act on their thoughts which can lead to sins. In fact, the beginning of sin is the evil notion. If a muslim does not block it by disliking it, it will become resistant. If a muslim does not resist it, it becomes whispers. If these whispers are not controlled through discipline they will lead to action.

A muslim should adopt vigilance of the divine vision by constantly reminding themselves of the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted. They should occupy their time with performing righteous or lawful deeds.

Observing the Faults of Others

Another negative trait of the soul is when one is so busy assessing the faults of others that they become heedless to their own faults. Those who expose the faults of others will find that Allah, the Exalted, exposes their faults and publically shames them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. Those who are heedless to their own faults should at least conceal the faults of others so that Allah, the Exalted, conceals their faults. More importantly, a muslim should reflect on their character and strive to eliminate negative traits through gaining Islamic knowledge and acting on it.

Self-Pity

Among the negative traits of the soul is when a muslim possesses self-pity. This can lead to other negative traits, such as ingratitude. It is important for a muslim to always remember the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, they possess. The reality of understanding that losing a blessing and still possessing countless more is something which all muslims should be grateful for. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

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

Hypocrisy

The next negative trait of the soul is being preoccupied with outward things, such as outward humility without it being in the heart. A muslim must remember the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. It advises that Allah, the Exalted, does not observe a person's outward form instead He observes one's heart meaning, their inner being. Outward humility without it being present in the heart is a type of hypocrisy muslims must avoid. It is more important to focus on correcting one's inner being and then move onto the outward state.

Seeking Reward from People

The next negative trait of the soul is seeking compensation from people after helping them. A muslim should understand that if they act for the sake of people they will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, on Judgement Day they will be told to seek their reward from the people who they acted for, which will not be possible. Only when a muslim acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will they gain reward from Him. A proof of this correct intention is when one does not seek compensation or gratitude from others after helping them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it]...”

Seeking High Social Status

Among the negative traits of the soul is seeking leadership and fame through knowledge. This includes taking pride in and showing off with one's knowledge. This is a dangerous characteristic which can take one straight to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 259.

This can be cured by understanding that every ounce of knowledge or any other blessing one possesses has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. So instead of boasting one should busy themselves in gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for protecting them from ignorance. In fact, the one who boasts over their knowledge is in fact ignorant as beneficial knowledge makes one more humble and fearful of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

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

Speaking Excessively

Another negative trait of the soul is speaking too often. This is caused by desiring the attention of people or when one does not understand the risk of vain and evil words. A muslim should be aware that their speech is recorded and they will be held accountable for them. Chapter 50 Qaf, verse 18:

“He [i.e., man] utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].”

One should always remember the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970. It warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3973, speech is the main cause of people entering Hell on Judgment Day.

It is best for each muslim to act on the short but extremely far reaching advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6018. He advised muslims to either speak good words or remain silent. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoy charity or that which is right or conciliation between people.”

*And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then
We are going to give him a great reward.”*

Praise and Criticism

Another negative trait of the soul is linked to excessive praise and censure. This is when one excessively praises others when they are pleased or excessively criticizes them when they are displeased. This occurs when one praises and censures others according to their own desires and whims instead of doing it according to Islamic teachings. Meaning, one should praise those who Allah, the Exalted, praises and censure those Allah, the Exalted, censures without crossing the limits by uttering lies in praise or insulting others when criticising. Criticism should always be constructive and done in a gentle manner privately. Those who contradict this manner only embarrass others and therefore only push them further away from accepting the truth. Praising others is a good method in encouraging them to do more good especially, children. But this should be done within limits and one should never utter vain words or lies when praising others.

Questioning Destiny

The next negative trait of the soul is having ingratitude for the divine choices and guidance of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should understand the fact that they only know the outward appearance of things and are extremely short sighted in observing the consequences of their choices. While Allah, the Exalted, knows what lies within things and the outcome of all things. Therefore, the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, will always be superior to the choice of His servant. If a person always had their wishes fulfilled they would eventually destroy them. Being discontent with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will not change His choice. It will only result in the anger of Allah, the Exalted. So it is best to accept the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as it always leads to good even if a person does not see the wisdom behind the decree. 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.”

Worldly Preoccupations

Another negative trait of the soul is being overly absorbed in worldly things and affairs. If this is done beyond one's necessities it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should therefore, busy themselves in taking from the material world in order to fulfill their necessities and responsibilities without excessiveness, extravagance or waste. And then they must concentrate on preparing for the hereafter. Anyone who oversteps this limit contradicts the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976. He advised that a muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them. The material world beyond one's necessities and responsibilities does not concern them.

Showing off

Among the negative traits of the soul is showing off one's righteous deeds to people. Muslims should understand that if they act for the sake of people they will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted, in this world or the next. In fact, according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4203, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from the people they acted for which will not be possible. In reality, pleasing people while disobeying Allah, the Exalted, is simply foolish as the people will not be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, if one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the displeasure of people will not affect them in this world or in the next even if this divine protection is not obvious to them.

Greed

Another negative trait of the soul is being extremely greedy for worldly things. This causes one to dedicate too much effort in obtaining worldly things. This causes one to neglect preparing for the eternal hereafter. In addition, extreme greed often causes a person to obtain worldly things in an unlawful way. This attitude can make an affluent person poor because of their constant need. A muslim should therefore not enslave themselves to worldly things when they should only be the slave of Allah, the Exalted. A person will only receive what was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation will not change irrespective of how greedy a person behaves. A muslim should therefore, strive to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities in this world according to the teachings of Islam without waste, extravagance and excessiveness and dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the hereafter.

Self-Admiration

Another negative trait of the soul is when one considers their own righteous deeds good while looking down on the efforts and righteous deeds of others. A muslim should understand that any good thing they possess or righteous deed they perform is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform the righteous deed. Therefore, they should remain grateful to Allah, the Exalted, instead of looking down on the deeds of others as this mercy can easily be transferred to others.

In addition, a person should bear in mind that the outcome of their life or the lives of others is unknown to them. Perhaps they will die while Allah, the Exalted, is angry with them and the one they look down at will depart this world while Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them. Therefore, they should not take pride in anything they own or do and instead take refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from an evil end through sincere obedience to Him, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Anger

Another negative trait of the soul is when one gets angry for their own sake according to their own desires. A muslim should only get angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This is when one is only angered when the commands of Allah, the Exalted, are violated. But even in cases like this, their response must be within the limits of Islam if they are not then it is proof that their anger is not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the condition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who never took revenge for his own sake but was only angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3560.

Stressing Over Provision

The next negative trait of the soul is having extreme worry about one's guaranteed provision and a lack of concern for what they have been commanded to do namely, the obligatory duties. When this worry becomes extreme it can take one towards seeking provision through unlawful means. A muslim should bear in mind that Allah, the Exalted, is the one who created them and has guaranteed to provide for them. The same way they do not doubt that He created them they should not doubt that He alone provides for them. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 40:

“Allah is the one who created you, then provided for you...”

In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has allocated the provision for each creation 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. How can one not receive something which was allocated to them so long ago?

A Hard Spiritual Heart

The next negative trait of the soul is when one often sins without sincerely repenting. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. This blackness increases until their whole spiritual heart becomes submerged in darkness. A hard hearted person will become heedless to their duties and continue to sin. It is therefore important for muslims to sincerely repent from major and minor sins and persist in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This will lead to a sound pure spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

Leading by Example

Among the negative traits of the soul is when one advises others while neglecting to act on the teachings themselves. In most cases, people like this only desire to obtain fame so they concentrate on this which causes them to neglect their own souls. It is important for Muslims to sincerely strive to correct themselves by acting on their knowledge and then aid others through their advice. In fact, acting on one's own advice will have a greater impact on the behaviour of others than merely advising them through words. This does not mean one must obtain perfection before advising others. It means they should sincerely try to act on their own advice then advise others.

Excess Comfort in the World

Another negative trait of the soul is desiring and striving for excess comfort in this material world. This can cause one to neglect their obligatory duties and striving in preparing for the hereafter. A muslim should act on the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. It advises that a muslim should live in this world as a stranger or a traveller. The one who behaves in such a way will understand that this world is not their permanent home so they will not seek excess comfort in it. They will instead strive to provide comfort for themselves in their permanent home namely, the hereafter. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7417, that the world is really a prison for the believer. How can a muslim then seek excess comfort in it? When one lives with the correct mentality they will find comfort in this world through peace of mind and prepare adequately for the next one also.

Fulfilling Desires

Among the negative traits of the soul is always fulfilling one's desires. This is a dangerous mentality to have as it can easily take one from lawful to unlawful desires. It is therefore best for a muslim to limit the desires they fulfil even if they are lawful. It is best to stick with the necessary and lawful desires and occasionally enjoy other lawful desires in order to prevent one from straying off course.

Worldly Companionship

Among the negative traits of the soul is excessively inclining towards the companionship of people for worldly reasons. It is important to know that a muslim will adopt the characteristics of their companions. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Therefore, a muslim should instead incline towards the pious.

In addition, a muslim should know that when they reach their grave their wealth and companions will leave them and only their deeds will stay with them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. Therefore, a muslim should be more concerned with sincerely performing righteous deeds then keeping company with people for worldly reasons. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Ignoring the Consequences of Actions

Among the negative traits of the soul is continuing in disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while believing one will escape punishment as no obvious punishment has occurred yet. A muslim must understand the difference between a punishment being delayed and being completely abandoned. Allah, the Exalted, does not disregard actions He sometimes delays the consequences of actions to give a person an opportunity to sincerely repent. A muslim should therefore take this opportunity before their time runs out.

Exposing the Faults of Others

The next negative trait of the soul is when a person loves to discuss the faults of others. A muslim should remember that whoever uncovers the faults of others will have their faults exposed. And whoever covers the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546. A muslim should therefore treat people how they wish to be treated by others by not exposing the faults of others and instead concealing them.

Standing Still

Another negative trait of the soul is when one is content with their actions and does not strive to improve them. A muslim should never remain still and should instead strive to improve in both words and actions and in both worldly and religious matters. No one demands perfection but they should strive to better themselves, bit by bit, just like they strive to improve their worldly possessions and wealth.

Wasting Time

The next negative trait of the soul is wasting time. This includes being occupied in things which do not concern a person. A muslim should know that time is a precious gift which does not return once it passes. The greatest regret people will face at death and in the hereafter is not utilizing the time they were given in this world correctly. A muslim should therefore act on the far reaching Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976. It advises that a person cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them. This includes wasting time on pointless activities.

Controlling Anger

Among the negative traits of the soul is when one allows their anger to control them thereby committing sins. A muslim should remember that acting and speaking in anger only leads to worldly regret and punishment in the hereafter. One should change body positions and make themselves more inactive in order to control their actions when angered, such as sitting down. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. In order to control their speech one should simply be silent until their anger passes from them. This has been advised in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 245. Words spoken in anger often cause more lasting damage than physical actions.

Vain & Evil Speech

The next negative trait of the soul is vain and evil speech, such as lying. A muslim should only speak words which are beneficial to them in this world or in the next. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. They should avoid evil words as this will cause them harm and avoid speech which is neither sinful nor beneficial namely, vain speech, as this will only waste their precious time which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. A muslim should remember that it only takes a single evil word to cause them to plummet into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970.

Stinginess

The next negative trait of the soul is being stingy. The root cause of this trait is the excess love of the material world. A muslim should remember that whatever they hoard will only be left behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. Whereas, whatever they send ahead in the form of charity will testify on their behalf on Judgment Day.

In addition, according to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from people, far from Paradise but close to Hell. Whereas, the generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to people, close to Paradise and far from Hell. If a muslim struggles to dedicate time beyond the obligatory duties in pleasing Allah, the Exalted, the least they can do is be very generous for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, hoping this attitude will lead to their salvation.

False Praise

Among the negative traits of the soul is being deluded by the false praise they receive from people. A muslim should remember that they know themselves better than others in respect to their secret actions and intentions. Therefore, they should never become deluded by the praise of people and instead understand it will not save them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, as He is fully aware of all their actions and intentions.

Envy

The next negative trait of the soul is envy. A muslim should know that being envious of others is a direct criticism of the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as none but He has given that blessing to the envied person. In reality, an envious person has a problem with Allah, the Exalted, not another person. How can this person possibly succeed? A muslim should remember Allah, the Exalted, gives each person what is best for them even if they do not understand how. They should simply submit to His choice and remain obedient to Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience at all times.

Striving for Lawful Provision

Among the negative traits of the soul is when out of laziness one gives up pursuing lawful provision and instead lives off others, such as social benefits yet, claims to behave in this manner because of their high level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This criticism is not direction at those who are legitimately entitled to benefits. A muslim should fulfil both elements of trust in Allah, the Exalted, by using the means they have been given, such as their strength and by trusting in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them as He has promised. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register.”

Constant Obedience

Another negative trait of the soul is when one believes they possess a purified heart and therefore do not need to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This obedience involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This completely contradicts the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as none had a more purified heart than him yet, he strived the hardest in obeying Allah, the Exalted. An example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6471, which advises that he offered so much voluntary prayers at night that his blessed feet used to swell up.

Counting Favours

Among the negative traits of the soul is counting the favours one does to others. This undoubtedly cancels the reward one could have obtained if they acted sincerely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury...”

If one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should seek reward from Him and no one else otherwise, they will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. This is warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The source of everything one gives to others is Allah, the Exalted. He is the Creator and real Owner of every blessing so a person should never take pride in helping others when the source of the help is Allah, the Exalted, alone.

Having Fun

Among the negative traits of the soul is always desiring and striving to have fun in the world. The one who is always in a joking mood will dislike and avoid discussing and acting on serious issues, such as preparing for death. This person will fail to prepare for the hereafter because of this attitude and therefore they will reach the next world empty handed. It is acceptable to be in a good mood but this should never prevent one from concentrating on serious issues. It why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith, found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, that too much laughter kills the spiritual heart.

Showing Gratitude

Another negative trait of the soul is when a person believes they require patience when in fact they should be showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. When a person faces a difficulty they should remember the countless blessings they still possess. And they should remember that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees the best for His servants even if they do not see the wisdoms behind the choice immediately. 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.”

These truths will inspire one to show gratitude even in difficult situations where most people would expect one to demonstrate patience.

Acting on Concessions

Among the negative traits of the soul is when one persistently acts on concessions instead of acting fully and correctly on the commands of Islam. A muslim must not adopt this attitude by failing to avoid doubtful things which can easily lead to the unlawful according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2051.

Disregarding Mistakes

Another negative trait of the soul is when one disregards their mistakes and sins. If a muslim persists on this attitude they will become habituated with these mistakes and sins and will then find it very difficult to sincerely repent from them. A muslim should therefore assess themselves constantly and sincerely repent when they commit a sin and avoid disregarding it. It is important to remember that a mountain is made up of small stones.

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