

Life of the Prophet Muhammad

صلى الله
عليه
وسلم

PodSeerah - Vol I



Achieve Noble Character

Life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

ShaykhPod Books

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Life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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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

Success and salvation in both worlds have been placed in following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

But this is not possible to achieve without learning and acting on the teachings found within the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, this book will discuss many of the events found within the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims can adopt his righteous path, which is the path of 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 the 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.

Life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Blessed Life in Mecca

Honouring Orphans

While the mother of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aminah Bint Wahb, was pregnant with him, his father, Abdullah Bin Abdul Muttalib died. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was orphaned even before being born into this world. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 20.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was an orphan should be enough for Muslims to honour and aid all orphans, according to their capacity.

In this day and age it is very simple to aid orphans as one can support them by aiding them financially through charities without being in close proximity to them. A Muslim should know that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5304, that the one who takes care of an orphan will be in close proximity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, in Paradise. This Hadith alone should be enough of a reason for a Muslim to strive in aiding orphans as the cost of this is very little. In fact, most people spend more money on their monthly phone bill. Each Muslim should at least sponsor one orphan and encourage others to do the same.

Generally speaking, this includes all types of aiding others not just financial aid. Any type of lawful need of others should be fulfilled according to one's strength and if a Muslim finds they cannot provide this aid then they should direct the needy person to someone who can help them. This will ensure they gain the same reward as the one who aids the needy person. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2671. Muslims must sincerely aid others in ways which benefit them solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without desiring any payback from people as this only leads to their reward being cancelled. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

Simply put, if a Muslim desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need then they must strive to aid others when they are in need. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. But those who turn away from helping others may well be left stranded in their time of need.

If Muslims desire to demonstrate true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they receive an increase in blessings then they must use the blessings they already possess correctly as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

An aspect of this is helping the needy with whatever one possesses such as good advice.

One should understand a vital point which will prevent them from becoming proud. Namely, the help they offer the needy is not innately theirs. It was created and therefore belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and they must therefore use it according to the wishes of the true owner by helping the needy. In reality, the needy are doing their helper a favor as they will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. If there was no one in need people would lose out on this method of gaining much reward.

Betraying the Truth

The scholars from the people of the book, Jews and Christians, were well aware of the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran, as they were both discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”

Many of them lived in Medina for generations as they were certain that it would be the city that the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would migrate to.

On the night the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was born, Hassan Bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, was a

eight-year-old boy living in Medina. That night a knowledgeable Jew shouted for the people's attention and announced to them that the birth of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was going to take place that night. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 152.

Even though they clearly recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran, many of them rejected Islam out of love for worldly gain, such as leadership and wealth, they had obtained through their faith.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same

in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, Muslims must share the useful knowledge their gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a Muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

A Blessed Day

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would often fast on Mondays. When he was questioned about that he replied that it was the day he was born and the day the first divine revelation was sent down to him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, Number 2750.

One should celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to his tradition, which is to fast on Mondays.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Spiritual Purification

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was two years old and under the care of his foster mother, Halimah Bint Dhu'ayb, two men wearing white garments came to him with a golden basin full of snow. They took him and split open his chest. They extracted his heart, split it open and then extracted and discarded a black clot from it. They then washed his heart and chest with that snow until they had fully cleansed them. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 23-24.

Muslims must take steps to cleanse their spiritual heart and the spiritual heart of those under their care, such as their children. This is achieved through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

Divinely Guided Upbringing

During his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. His father died before his birth and his mother died when he was only a child, around six years old. He was then raised by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who died a few years later, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was eight years old. He was finally raised by his uncle, Abu Talib Bin Abdul Muttalib.

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Pages 168, 173 and 180.

From this divine protection, care and upbringing of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a lesson for all Muslims to correctly treat and raise those under their care.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

The importance of correctly raising those under one's care is also mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds Muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a Muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

Rejecting Falsehood

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was 12 years old, he accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a business trip to Syria. On the way they met a monk called Bahira. The monk hosted them and commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the master of all humans and destined to be the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. He recognized him from his characteristics mentioned in the previous divine scriptures. Bahira held a discussion with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which further proved his destiny. During this conversation the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that he hated nothing more than the two famous idols, which the non-Muslims of Arabia worshipped, Laat and Uzza. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 174-176.

Even at such a young age the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was guided to reject blindly imitating his people in worshipping man-made, lifeless and powerless idols.

Generally speaking, blind imitation of one's forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

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.

Accepting the Truth

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was 12 years old, he accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a business trip to Syria. On the way they met a monk called Bahira. The monk hosted them and commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the master of all humans and destined to be the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. He recognized him from his characteristics mentioned in the previous divine scriptures. He advised Abu Talib to send the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, back to Mecca and not take him further into Syria, as the Jewish scholars would recognize him and may harm him out of fear of losing their prestige and wealth with the coming of Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 60-61.

Bahira was a person who accepted and acted on the truth and therefore accepted it when he recognized the characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

The Pact of Al Fudul

This pact was an agreement that no one within Mecca would take unfair advantage over anyone else especially, a foreigner. This pact was made 20 years before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced prophethood in Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took part in this noble pact and after announcing Prophethood, he once commented that he would still uphold the pact. This has been discussed in detail in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 186.

This event teaches Muslims to always take part in things which are good and beneficial for society irrespective of who is involved. Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is

bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

In addition, this event teaches Muslims the importance of upholding their promises.

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

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

Finally, this event teaches Muslims the importance helping those who facing difficulties.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a Muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This

has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

Noble Merchant

Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, may Allah be pleased with her, was a merchant of great stature and wealth in Mecca prior to the coming of Islam and even after. She would employ men to trade her goods on her behalf in distant lands. Prior to the announcement of Prophethood and her marriage to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, she heard of the truthfulness, trustworthy nature and noble character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She proposed that he should trade her goods on her behalf in Syria. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed and traded her goods with the utmost sincerity and honesty in Syria and she made a handsome profit from this business venture. This incident is reported in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Pages 189-190.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Islam teaches good character in all aspects of one's life. This event clearly demonstrates the importance of being honest and sincere in all business transactions. In fact, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are

involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

An Honest Living

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2262, that every Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, sent by Allah, the Exalted, at one point in their blessed life was a shepherd of sheep. And prior to him announcing Prophethood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was employed as a shepherd by the people of Mecca.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the

Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Marriage to Khadija (RA)

Prior to the announcement of Prophethood, when Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, witnessed the noble character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, she proposed marriage to him. He accepted the proposal as she herself was a decisive, noble, highly respected and intelligent woman. This has been reported in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 190.

This event makes it clear that Muslims should choose a spouse based on their good character. In a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with

the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a Muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Rebuilding of the Kaaba - 1

Prior to the announcement of Prophethood, the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, had been damaged and so the people of Mecca decided to rebuild it. The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca decided to only use the wealth which was obtained through good means on rebuilding the Kaaba, out of respect for it. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 29.

If polytheists understood the importance of utilizing only what is good, then Muslims must be even more careful to ensure they earn and utilize only what is lawful.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is earning and using unlawful wealth. This is a major sin and must be avoided at all costs. It is clear from the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. For example, the one who earns unlawful wealth and then uses it to perform the Holy Pilgrimage will find that they have wasted their time and apart from sins they have gained nothing. This attitude completely contradicts possessing the fear of Allah, the Exalted. He only accepts things from those who fear Him. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 27:

“...Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him].”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410, warns that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts lawful wealth which is spent to please Him. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that even the supplication of the one who earns and uses unlawful wealth is rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, a person only needs a little to survive in this world. It is clear from the righteous predecessors that it is possible to completely abstain from unlawful or doubtful wealth by leading a moderate life which is far from extravagance. It is obvious one only leans towards unlawful wealth because of their unnecessary desires and wishes.

Rebuilding of the Kaaba - 2

Prior to the announcement of Prophethood, the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, had been damaged and so the people of Mecca decided to rebuild it. When the Black Stone needed to be lifted into its place they fell into a serious and potentially violent dispute over who should place it. They all agreed that they would let the first person to enter the sacred area, surrounding the Kaaba, decide. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was this person and as they all recognized him as trustworthy and reliable they were pleased to accept his advice. He suggested that the Black Stone be placed in the middle of a cloth and he ordered the leaders of the local tribes to each hold a corner of the cloth. They then lifted the Black Stone up and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took the Stone and positioned it. This event has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 197-198.

This event teaches Muslims the importance of adopting a positive attitude whereby they aim to eliminate feuds and disagreements between people. In fact, this important characteristic is mentioned in chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114 of the Holy Quran:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin...conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

This involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this event also indicates the importance of unity amongst people as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, united the leaders of the tribes of Mecca instead of causing further divisions by choosing one leader over another, during the positioning of the Black Stone.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on

others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that

an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Anticipating the Last Prophet (PBUH)

Prior to the announcement of Prophethood, the scholars of Judaism and Christianity, who were mainly living in Medina, were all awaiting and anticipating the arrival of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as he had been described in detail in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”

For example, there was a Jewish scholar named Yusha who lived in Medina. He would often declare that the time was near for the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, to be sent to the people of Arabia. He would urge people to believe in this final Holy Prophet, peace and be upon them, if they lived to his time and witnessed his call. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared Prophethood, the same people Yusha urged to accept this final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted him and became Muslims but Yusha

himself rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam out of envy and evil. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 212.

It is important for Muslims to avoid the major sin of envy. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is

the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

One of the reasons why many of the Jewish and Christian scholars rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was out of envy. They envied the fact that he was a descendent of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, instead of being a descendent of the Holy Prophet Ishaq, peace be upon him, like they were. Even though this was a foolish reason to reject Islam but in reality they were under the impression that the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would greatly honor them and appoint them as leaders for mankind out of some loyalty to brotherhood. According to their belief, this leadership would increase them in social status and wealth. But when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, constructively criticized their blatant disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, which was fueled by their extreme love for wealth and social status, they rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam.

It is therefore vital for Muslims to avoid the excess love for wealth and social status. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the

destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to

deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Blind Loyalty

Some of the scholars of Judaism and Christianity would openly admit that the signs mentioned in their divine scriptures of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, matched the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”

But some simply rejected him and Islam out of blind loyalty to their people who stubbornly rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of envy and enmity. For example, a Jewish scholar named Abdullah Bin Suriya once sat with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, after the latter migrated to Medina, and admitted that he was the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as his signs and characteristics were clear in their divine scriptures. When he was questioned why he did not accept Islam when he knew the truth, he simply replied that he disliked to disagree with his people and added that if his people accepted Islam so would he. This incident is recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 234.

It is vital for Muslims to never blindly follow people especially in situations which involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, a Muslim

should carefully choose their companions as they will always have a positive or negative effect on them. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

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

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

Noble Qualities

Some of the scholars of Judaism and Christianity would openly admit that the signs mentioned in their divine scriptures of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, matched the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”

But some simply rejected him and Islam out of blind loyalty to their people who stubbornly rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of envy and enmity.

Some of the qualities and characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned in the Torah, which were concealed by the scholars of the people of the book, have been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2125, and include: “O Prophet! We have sent you as a witness and a giver of glad tidings and a warner and guardian of the illiterates. You are My slave and My Messenger...”

This 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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

The description continues: “...I have named you “Al Mutawakkil” (the one who trusts in Allah, the Exalted).”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

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

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

The description continues: "...You are neither discourteous, harsh nor a noisemaker in the markets. And you do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness..."

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2016, the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, described some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She advised that he was neither obscene nor loud-mouthed. He never replied evil with evil and instead forgave and overlooked the faults of others.

First of all, all Muslims must understand that it is a duty on them to adopt the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

And Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

A Muslim must never act or speak in an obscene way as this is hated by Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 464. Behaving in this manner is the very essence of bad character. And as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can predict the evil outcome of the one who reaches the Day of Judgment as an obscene person. In addition, the one who is obscene in speech is much more likely to enter Hell as it only takes a single obscene word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. Put simply, true faith and obscenity can never gather in a single heart.

A Muslim should not be loud-mouthed as this leads to the loss of respect from others especially, one's relatives. The loud-mouthed often comes across aggressive and can easily frighten others which contradicts the behavior of a true Muslim. A Muslim must be gentle and kind when

conversing with others as this shows the true and peaceful nature of Islam. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 19:

"...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys."

Finally, a Muslim must understand that as people are not perfect they are bound to make mistakes. Just like a person desires to be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, they should overlook and pardon others. Put simply, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. It is foolishness not to forgive others yet expect the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?..."

The description continues: "...Allah will not let him (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) die till he makes straight the crooked people by making them say: "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah," with which will be opened blind eyes and deaf ears and enveloped hearts."

This right guidance is achieved when one sincerely obeys and follows the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and what he brought, meaning, the Holy Quran.

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Solitude in the Cave of Hira

Solitude and Reflection - 1

The first indication of revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came in the form of true dreams. Every dream he witnessed came true. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then developed a liking for solitude. He would spend time alone in the cave of Hira, near Mecca, where he would seek religious purification through devotions. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403.

It has been suggested by some scholars that the religious devotions the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, performed at this time, prior to the first revelation being revealed to him, was reflection. This reflection on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and on the teachings of Islam is a powerful way of increasing the strength of one's faith. In fact, a great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

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

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

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

God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

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

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

In addition, the solitude adopted by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicates that Muslims should also reduce their unnecessary socialising so that they can concentrate on more important issues.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to achieve salvation. One of these things is that a person should not leave their home unnecessarily. Behaving in this manner leads to wasting time and both verbal and physical sins. If one truly sincerely reflects they will realize that the majority of their sins and the problems they encountered were due to unnecessarily socializing with others. This does not mean it was always the fault of others but it means if one avoids unnecessarily leaving their

home they would sin less and encounter less problems and difficulties. This would also free up their time to learn and act on Islamic teachings more which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life.

Solitude and Reflection - 2

The first indication of revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came in the form of true dreams. Every dream he witnessed came true. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then developed a liking for solitude. He would spend time alone in the cave of Hira, near Mecca, where he would seek religious purification through devotions. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, adopted a solitude lifestyle as he observed the great error his people were living in and did not desire to join them on their path. This indicates the importance of avoiding bad companionship.

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

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A

Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for Muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a Muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

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

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

Mission of Prophethood Begins

Sincerity to Allah (SWT)

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, discusses the first revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he was in the cave of Hira the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, came to him and revealed the first word namely, “recite”. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he was unlettered. When this exchange happened a few times the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, then recited the first five verses of chapter 96 Al Alaq to him and left:

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.”

An important thing to note, is that the first verse ever revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicates the importance of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted. This means a Muslim should always act and speak in order to please 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.

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.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward as this Muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting

on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a Muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is when one publically recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publically can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a Muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech.

Importance of Knowledge

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, discusses the first revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he was in the cave of Hira the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, came to him and revealed the first word namely, “recite”. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he was unlettered. When this exchange happened a few times the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, then recited the first five verses of chapter 96 Al Alaq to him and left:

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.”

An important thing to note, is that the first verses to be revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicates the importance of gaining and acting on knowledge.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

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.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being unlettered was important as he would have been accused of plagiarising from the previous divine scriptures, if he was learned and educated. In other words, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

Natural Fear and Anxiety

As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, after the first divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned back to his home and wife while his heart was pounding. He asked his wife to cover him up with a blanket because of his anxiety and fear.

This incident indicates that being emotional within limits is acceptable when facing different situations such as being sad during a difficult time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reacted in a normal and natural way and was not criticized by Allah, the Exalted, as showing emotion is a part of being human. As long as the emotion is within the limits of Islam it is completely acceptable to show it. No one expects a Muslim to act like a robot in difficult situations. In each situation, a Muslim should maintain a balance whereby they release their tension through their emotions without crossing the limits of Islam. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you. And Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

This verse does not prohibit a person from being sad or happy. But it advises one not to be extreme in these two emotions namely, grief and to be exultant both of which can lead to sins.

A Muslim should always remember that as long as they remain within these limits they will successfully overcome all difficulties, earn reward and blessings in both worlds. This has been indicated at the end of this great event where Allah, the Exalted, granted safety to the one who obeyed Him. This safety may not be obvious to a Muslim in the short term but it will eventually be revealed to them in this world or in the next.

Sincerity to Others

As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, after the first divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned back to his home and wife while his heart was pounding. He asked his wife to cover him up with a blanket because of anxiety and fear. After relating what had occurred with the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, to his wife, she demonstrated sincerity to him by comforting him in his moment of stress.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Noble Character Leads to Honour

As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, after the first divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned back to his home and wife while his heart was pounding. He asked his wife to cover him up with a blanket because of anxiety and fear. After relating what had occurred with the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, to his wife, she demonstrated sincerity to him by comforting him in his moment of stress. She achieved this while sticking to the truth and by narrating some of the blessed characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to reassure him that he had nothing to fear.

This incident indicates that the one who adopts noble character will always be honoured by Allah, the Exalted, even if they face tests and trials.

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”

A Wife's Honesty

As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, after the first divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned back to his home and wife while his heart was pounding. He asked his wife to cover him up with a blanket because of anxiety and fear. After relating what had occurred with the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, to his wife, she demonstrated sincerity to him by comforting him in his moment of stress. She achieved this while sticking to the truth and by narrating some of the blessed characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to reassure him that he had nothing to fear. The first blessed characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, she mentioned was that he maintained his ties of kinship.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties

of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

The next blessed characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned by Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, in order to comfort him in his moment of stress, was that he always spoke the truth.

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.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the

things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

The next blessed characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned by Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, in order to comfort him in his moment of stress, was that he always helped the needy and those facing difficulties.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a Muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties is guaranteed for all this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A Muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not have to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

Finally, it is important Muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

A Warning of Difficulties

As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 403, after the first divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned back to his home and related the incident with the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, to his wife Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her. She took him to her cousin, Waraqah Bin Nawfal, who was a Christian who had studied the previous divine scriptures. When he was informed of what had occurred he confirmed that this was the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, and warned the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that his people would become hostile towards him because of what he had and will be given meaning, the Holy Quran and the message of Islam.

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

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad

or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

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

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

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and

attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

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

Spreading the Message

The divine revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was then delayed for a short period. Then on one occasion when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was walking in Mecca he looked towards the sky and saw the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, sitting on a chair in between the sky and the Earth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned home frightened and asked his family to cover him in a blanket. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed the following verses of the Holy Quran to him: Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 1-5:

“O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn. And your Lord glorify. And your clothing purify. And uncleanness avoid.”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3238.

Even though there are many characteristics one must adopt before spreading the message of Islam, these verses indicate one of the most important ones namely, leading by example.

Those who spread the word of Islam must strive to first act on their knowledge. In the early days of Islam to attend a gathering of Islamic

knowledge one had to journey for days but now countless lectures can be found online. Yet, ignorance of the correct path has only increased since the passing of the righteous predecessors. This is because some have acquired knowledge by memorizing verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but have not used them to purify their character. Meaning, they did not act on their knowledge. Those who act like this will lose the power to affect the hearts of others through their advice. Some lecturers are like news bulletins that only provide information without stimulating others to act thereby failing in their duty to guide others through their God given knowledge. Non-Muslims are mainly accepting Islam through their own research of Islam instead of observing a practical example of a successful Muslim. One who desires to spread Islam must make it their priority to purify their character through knowledge. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

When one acts in this way then a little correct knowledge will have a massive impact on themselves and others. Whereas, those who reject this correct attitude may possess more knowledge but it will have no positive affect on anybody. This type of person has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

Systematic Approach

When chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 214 was revealed:

“And warn your closest kindred.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ascended Mount Safa and gathered his relatives around him. He first reminded them of his trustworthy and honest nature by asking them if they would believe him if he told them there was a cavalry in the valley intending to attack them. They all replied in the positive and declared his honest nature. He then warned them about disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and invited them towards Islam. His non-Muslim uncle, Abu Lahab, then cursed him. As a response, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 111 Al Masad, verses 1-5:

“May the hands of Abū Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he. His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained. He will [enter to] burn in a Fire of [blazing] flame. And his wife [as well] - the carrier of firewood. Around her neck is a rope of [twisted] fiber.”

This incident has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4770.

In the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to begin spreading the word of Islam from his relatives. This is another important aspect of spreading the word of Islam. One should always begin with relatives and then move forward to the other members of society. Due to a person's close bonds and familiarity with their relatives advising them will have more of an affect than advising strangers. In fact, if each person concentrated on their own relatives advising non relatives would only be required on a few occasions. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 214:

“And warn, [O Muhammad], your closest kindred.”

After this step the Holy Quran advises one to spread the word of Islam within their local society. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 7:

“And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Quran that you may warn the Mother of Cities [i.e., Mecca] and those around it...”

The final step is to invite mankind on a national level towards Islam. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 28:

“And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner...”

Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this gradual process so therefore, each Muslim who undertakes this task should also adopt this method.

This incident also indicates the importance of becoming trustworthy, especially, when one desires to spread the call of Islam.

In order to correctly spread the word of Islam one must be trustworthy. The Holy Quran specifically mentions how the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, declared that they were trustworthy and only desired the benefit of others. For example, Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 161-162:

“When their brother Lot said to them, “Will you not fear Allah? Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.”

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced Prophethood the people all agreed that he was trustworthy even though many went back on their own words and denied him. This is mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 10, Pages 622-623.

The First Believers

Truthful Companions

It is widely known that Abu Bakr Ibn Abu Quhafa, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first adult male who accepted the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Islam without hesitation, whereas all other men showed different degrees of hesitation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq, Page 51, and indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3661.

One of the reasons Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, readily accepted the truth of Islam is because he already had a deep bond of friendship with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, witnessed the truth of Islam through knowing the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior to his call to Islam. Even though, the non-Muslims of Mecca observed the same thing yet they stubbornly rejected Islam.

In addition, he readily accepted the truth as he was a man of truth. Meaning, prior to Islam he searched for, accepted and adopted the characteristics of truthfulness. Therefore, when the truth of Islam was presented to him, he accepted it without hesitation.

As Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was raised in the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he adopted truthfulness in all his affairs. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commissioned as a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, he invited Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, towards Islam. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he desired to discuss it with his father, Abu Talib, first. But the next day, without discussing the matter with his father, he came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam. He was around 10 years old at the time. Thus, he became the first child to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 68-69.

In addition, Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, readily accepted the call of her husband, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without hesitation, and became the first woman to accept Islam.

Zaid Ibn Haritha, may Allah be pleased with him, was a freed servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He was a child at the advent of Islam and readily accepted the truth when it was presented to him. Thus, he became the first freed slave to enter Islam.

Each accepted Islam as they adopted truthfulness as their way. Muslims must strive to emulate the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by adopting truthfulness in all aspects of their lives.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to

disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Guiding Others to Faith

After accepting Islam, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, busied himself in inviting others towards the truth. Due to his efforts many people accepted Islam. These people went on to become the prominent and senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people included: Zubair Bin Awwam, Uthman Ibn Affan, Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, Abu Ubaidah Ibn Jarrah, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf and many more, may Allah be pleased with all of them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq*, Page 55.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 31 Luqman, verse 15:

"...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me..."

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 31:15, Page 126.

One of the ways Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, achieved this great deed is through leading by example. When the others observed the signs of Islam in his character and actions, instead of only on his tongue, it encouraged them to accept the truth.

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

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

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

Key to Happiness

Even though many of the people who accepted Islam were considered from the lower class of society, such as slaves, yet many prominent and respectful members of society also accepted the divine message of Islam, such as: Abu Bakr, Zubair Ibn Awwam, Uthman Ibn Affan, Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, Abu Ubaidah Ibn Jarrah, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, Sa'eed Ibn Zaid, Abdullah Ibn Jahsh, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, and many others, may Allah be pleased with them. But when these prominent members of society accepted Islam, they lost the respect and honour they once had within Mecca. This is the reason why most Islamic historians state that the majority of the people who accepted Islam at its early stage were considered from the lower class of society. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 161-163.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of searching for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, over the pleasure of people and society. If these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, searched for the pleasure of people they would have never accepted Islam.

Many people set the standards for their happiness according to the rules and desires of other people. The problem with this mentality is that one will become sad or happy depending on the desires of people. If they persist on this attitude than they reach a level where they love, hate, give, withhold and act according to the desires of people. This attitude will only lead to overall sadness in one's life as truly pleasing others is unattainable. People are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, when He granted them countless blessings how can they possibly be pleased with people who

innately gave them nothing? So living with the attitude of always aiming to please others will only result in sadness.

A Muslim should therefore strive to obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, which is easily obtainable. This person will love, hate, give and withhold for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This is only achieved through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This will lead to true happiness in both worlds and therefore it is the key to happiness.

Listening to Knowledge

In the early period of divine revelation, due to his eagerness to receive the divine revelation, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to join the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, through recitation. Allah, the Exalted, then ordered him to carefully listen to the revelation and promised him He would store it in his heart and enable him to recite and announce it after. Allah, the Exalted, would clarify, explain and enable him to fully understand it also. Chapter 75 Al Qiyamah, verses 16-19:

“Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], to hasten with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran]. Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its clarification [to you].”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 936.

One of the lessons to learn from this incident is that a Muslim should not only carefully listen to knowledge but also strive to act on it.

Listening correctly to the word of Allah, the Exalted, is the only way one can correctly adhere to its teachings. It is important to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is simply acknowledging a sound with one's mind even if they fail to make sense of the noise. For example, a person may hear someone shouting at them from a great distance but they will not be able to understand what they are saying. Whereas, listening involves hearing a sound and understanding it so that one's behaviour changes. For example, a person giving a specific verbal instruction to another who responds appropriately after hearing and understanding the instructions.

Muslims need to hear the word of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to understand it so that it affects their behaviour in a positive way. Unfortunately, many Muslims have failed to live up to this in respect to the Holy Quran as they are good at hearing the recitation of the Holy Quran but fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

To conclude, simply hearing the word of Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough to obtain success one must strive to instead truly listen to it.

Gathering for Knowledge

As the call of Islam was secretly reaching different households, the threat and danger from the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca began to increase exponentially. But even during this dangerous time the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, continued to gather with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in order to teach them about Islam. The house of Al Arqam was chosen as their secret meeting place. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 167-168.

Even in the face of great danger the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, continued to seek and act on Islamic knowledge. It is a shame that many Muslims today have easy and safe access to this knowledge yet hardly pay attention to it.

In a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about

knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

A Public Call to Islam

When the Companions of the Holy Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them, became around 38 in number, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, urged the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to proclaim and invite others openly. When this was agreed upon, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, entered the sacred area around the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, rose and addressed all who were present in and around the Mosque while the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained seated next to him. He was the first man who openly called people towards accepting Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the non-Muslims of Mecca heard his call they became extremely angry and violent fights broke out in the Mosque between them and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was badly wounded. He was taken to his home where he regained consciousness and enquired about the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 319-320.

This incident reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the

disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

Steadfast on the Truth

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, continued to call upon people to believe in Allah, the Exalted, day and night, secretly and openly, without anyone being able to deter, dissuade or prevent him. He followed people everywhere into their celebrations, meetings and gatherings, to the fairs and to the pilgrimage stations. Everyone he met, a free person or slave, weak or powerful, rich or poor, he called towards Islam; as far as he was concerned all were equal and alike. In the face of physical and verbal violence he continued his mission without weakness or hopelessness. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 334.

On many occasions the non-Muslims of Mecca urged the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to stop his mission but he never quit. On one occasion he declared that even if the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca placed the Sun in his right hand and the Moon in his left, he would never abandon the call to Islam, even if that led to his death. He meant that no worldly influence or favours would prevent him from completing his mission. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 44.

It is important for Muslims to adopt steadfastness on the teachings of Islam. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness..."

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Equality

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, continued to call upon people to believe in Allah, the Exalted, day and night, secretly and openly, without anyone being able to deter, dissuade or prevent him. Everyone he met, a free person or slave, weak or powerful, rich or poor, he called towards Islam; as far as he was concerned all were equal and alike. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 334.

This struggle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in inviting all people towards Islam clearly indicates the importance of equality in Islam.

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

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

possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

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

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

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

Accepting and Standing Firm on the Truth

Even though the majority of the relatives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, violently opposed him, his uncle, Abu Talib, who never accepted Islam, favored him above all other men for his fine qualities. He treated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with the utmost compassion and kindness and gave him his support and protection. In doing this he was in opposition to his own people and religion. Even though Abu Talib did extend his tribal protection to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and loved him very much yet he never accepted Islam out of misplaced loyalty to his people, even though he knew Islam was the truth. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 337.

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

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

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel

which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

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

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

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

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

Patience in the Face of Evil

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would take every opportunity to call people towards Islam. But those who opposed him, such as his uncle Abu Lahab, strived hard against him in order to prevent the message of Islam from spreading. For example, during the fair of Dhu Al Majaz, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called people towards Islam. His uncle, Abu Lahab, would follow him everywhere he went and would hurl lies and abuses at him. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 335.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition, the attitude demonstrated by Abu Lahab in this particular incident is an aspect of hypocrisy which Muslims must avoid.

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

Worshipping Desires

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar or madman. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man or Jinn.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which the non-Muslims of Mecca full-well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

"...for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

Even though, the non-Muslims of Mecca were convinced of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran, many of them rejected Islam and remained firm on their religion.

The truth is that each worshipper of false deities only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. They advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This attitude has nothing to do with Islam being the right or wrong religion based on clear evidence, it is simply about fulfilling one's desires.

Delaying Punishment

Abu Jahl, the non-Muslim uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that if he saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praying near the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he would trample on his neck while he was in prostration. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, began to pray, Abu Jahl approached him in order to carry out his evil plan but he quickly hastened away, fleeing like a donkey from a lion. When he was questioned about his actions, he replied that he observed a ditch of fire, full of terror and wings, which appeared between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, later commented that if Abu Jahl continued with his evil plan, the Angels would have torn him to pieces. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7065.

Allah, the Exalted, could have destroyed Abu Jahl during this incident but he held back His punishment in order to give him an opportunity to sincerely repent.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 61:

“And if Allāh were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon it [i.e., the earth] any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”

The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

Firm on Prayer

Abu Jahl, the non-Muslim uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that if he saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praying near the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he would trample on his neck while he was in prostration. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, began to pray, Abu Jahl approached him in order to carry out his evil plan but he quickly hastened away, fleeing like a donkey from a lion. When he was questioned about his actions, he replied that he observed a ditch of fire, full of terror and wings, which appeared between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, later commented that if Abu Jahl continued with his evil plan, the Angels would have torn him to pieces. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed the following verses, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to continue praying, chapter 96 Al Alaq, verses 6-19:

“No! [But] indeed, man transgresses. Because he sees himself self-sufficient. Indeed, to your Lord is the return. Have you seen the one who forbids. A servant when he prays? Have you seen if he is upon guidance. Or enjoins righteousness? Have you seen if he denies and turns away. Does he not know that Allāh sees? No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forelock. A lying, sinning forelock. Then let him call his associates. We will call the angels of Hell. No! Do not obey him. But prostrate and draw near [to Allāh].”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7065.

It is important to note that even in the face of such danger and violence, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, never abandoned praying to Allah, the Exalted, even before the five daily prayers were made obligatory. This therefore, indicates the importance of establishing the prayers.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma’un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter

Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

"[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed."

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families must encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Searching for Truth

Abu Dharr Ghafari, may Allah be pleased with him, was someone who did not worship idols and believed in one God, even before accepting Islam. When he heard about Islam, he entered Mecca desiring to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in secret, as he was aware of the hatred of the non-Muslims of Mecca for Islam. Ali Bin Abu Talib, met Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with them, and after finding out about his purpose, he helped set up a secret meeting between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 71-72.

Ali put himself in danger in order to help and guide Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with them.

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

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A

person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

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

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

Justice in Business

A man once brought into Mecca some camels which he sold to the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl. But Abu Jahl delayed paying for them and when the man requested help from the people of Mecca, as he was a stranger in the city, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, aided him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took the man to the home of Abu Jahl, knocked on his door and when he answered, he commanded him to pay the man what was owed. With great fear, Abu Jahl hurried inside his home and returned with the money and the man left after thanking the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Later on, Abu Jahl told people that during the incident his heart was full of terror and when he opened the door he saw a dangerous and angry stallion camel next to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and he feared the creature would eat him, so he paid the man what was due. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 340-341.

This incident indicates the importance of being honest and just in all business dealings. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings

of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

In addition, this incident indicates the importance of aiding those in difficulties by objecting to evil practices. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all Muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a Muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised Muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates themselves and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”

But it is important to note, a Muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to Muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed...do not spy...”

It is important to note, that a Muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A Muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a Muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

The next thing mentioned in this Hadith is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims

should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

A Pure Intention

Once the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca offered the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all the wealth he desired. They also offered to make him their tribal leader and even their king but all he had to do was abandon preaching Islam. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that his intention in delivering the message of Islam was not for the sake of gaining wealth, honor or sovereignty. His only intention was to fulfill his mission as the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, of Allah, the Exalted, in order to please Him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 347-348.

From this incident a Muslim can learn the importance of not desiring worldly things when spreading the knowledge of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All

other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Foolish Requests

In order to put people off from accepting Islam, the non-Muslims of Mecca came up with foolish requests, some of which have been recorded in the Holy Quran, such as requesting an Angel to openly appear in front of them and verify that he was the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 348-349. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 7:

“Why do you not bring us the angels, if you should be among the truthful?”

Belief in the unseen is a core element of faith and without it faith loses its value. If the things which are unseen, such as Angels, were made apparent to people in this world then it would diminish the quality of their faith.

The unseen are things which cannot be perceived through the five senses in this world for example, Hell. They must be accepted as true the knowledge of which was brought and confirmed by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is another indication that right guidance is not possible without following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the knowledge regarding the unseen, such as the existence of Hell, can only be delivered by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The unseen must stay hidden in this life. If they are revealed then the concept of faith becomes meaningless as

faith involves belief in something which is beyond the perception of the five senses.

The Muslim who truly believes in the unseen, such as Paradise, even though they have not witnessed it should also firmly believe that everything which occurs in their life, whether it is pleasing to them or not, occurs for a good reason even if that reason is unseen to them. So the same way one firmly believes in these unseen things they should believe in the wise choices of Allah, the Exalted, which are also unseen. This will encourage them towards patience and lead them to an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The non-Muslims of Mecca even found it strange that Allah, the Exalted, would send a human as a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, instead of an Angel.

As a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is sent to humans it does not make sense to send them as anything else, such as Angels. The very function of a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is for the people to obtain a practical example of how they must behave in every aspect of their lives. An Angel does not experience what humans feel, such as fatigue, so the people would not be able to relate to their Angel Prophet, peace be upon him, and this would give them an excuse in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

Therefore, why were the non-Muslims astonished that a human being had been appointed to warn other human beings. Similarly, is there anything strange about appointing a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, in order to guide mankind? For if people are found drowned in misguidance and are oblivious to the truth, what then is truly strange: that their Creator and Lord should make arrangements to guide them or let them continue in misguidance and error? And if divine guidance is made available to human beings, does it not make sense that those who accept it and follow it, rather than those who reject it, deserve to be held in honour by Allah, the Exalted? The behaviour of those who express their astonishment at this is in fact astonishing.

Divine Proximity

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not receive divine revelation for two or three days, a non-Muslim noblewoman declared that he had been forsaken. As a response. Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 93 Ad Duhaa, verses 1-3:

“By the morning brightness. And [by] the night when it covers with darkness. Your Lord has not taken leave of you, nor has He detested [you].”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4950.

How could Allah, the Exalted, forsake the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when he constantly remembered Him?

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

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

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

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

Steadfast on Belief

One of the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca, Harith Bin Uthman, once told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they (the leaders of the non-Muslims) knew that he was truthful about Islam but they were afraid that by accepting Islam the rest of the non-Muslim Arabs would drive them out of their land. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 57:

“And they say, "If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be swept from our land." Have We not established for them a safe sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from Us? But most of them do not know.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 28:57, Pages 123-124.

This was not a valid excuse as the whole of the Arabian Peninsula at the time highly respected the Meccans as they were the custodians of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, a place which was highly respected even during the age of ignorance. Even if their excuse was true to a certain point none the less faith demands one to remain firm on the truth even in the face of hardships, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, done. In addition, if Allah, the Exalted, granted them

security and provision while they were drowned in idol worshipping why would He take these blessings away after they sincerely obeyed Him?

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Compromising on the Quran

The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca once requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to edit the Holy Quran so that they all could accept its teachings and be united on it. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 10 Yunus, verse 15:

“And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, those who do not expect the meeting with Us say, “Bring us a Qur’ān other than this or change it.” Say, “It is not for me to change it on my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.””

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 10:15, Page 95.

A Muslim can behave in such a manner when they intentionally ignore some parts of the Holy Quran which contradict their desires and accept the other parts which suit their desires. This attitude must be avoided.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, *Awareness and Apprehension*, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment

Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a Muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function

and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true Muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

The Resurrection

One of the leaders of the non-Muslims, Ubayy Bin Khalaf, once held a decaying bone in his hand and mocked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by stating that he claimed that Allah, the Exalted, would resurrect the dead after their bones had decayed and turned into dust. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 19 Maryam, verse 66:

“And man [the disbeliever] says, "When I have died, am I going to be brought forth alive?"”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 19:66, Page 110.

When Allah, the Exalted, created mankind from nothing, resurrecting them from dust and bones will be easier for Him.

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in

order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense i.e. the Day of Judgment.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

In addition, when one observes the Heavens and Earth and observes the countless cycles of life and death, such as the coming and going of the day and night, the seasons and the lands for growing crops, they will understand that they too will face a cycle of death and life namely, the resurrection on Judgement Day.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Gifts or Giver

In order to put people off from accepting Islam the non-Muslims of Mecca came up with foolish requests. They even asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to request Allah, the Exalted, to grant him gardens, castles and treasures of gold and silver so his needs are taken of. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would not request such worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, as this was not part of his mission. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 348-349.

It is important for Muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of Muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These Muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

These Muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a Muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

Not a Controller

The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca would often debate with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to put others off from accepting Islam. During these conversations the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would be most eager for them to accept the truth. But often they would only alienate and insult him at which he would return home sad and regretful at failing to persuade them to accept Islam. One such incident is discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 348-349.

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.

Respite or Destruction

The non-Muslims of Mecca once asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to turn a mountain in Mecca, Mount Safa, into gold for them and to move away the mountains so that they could grow crops. He was told by Allah, the Exalted, that it was up to him to decide whether to give respite and ignore their foolish requests or if he desired, Allah, the Exalted, would fulfill their requests. But if they disbelieved in Islam after that they would be completely destroyed just like the previous nations who rejected the open signs of Allah, the Exalted, were completely destroyed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose to give them respite and ignore their foolish requests as he knew that they would still disbelieve after. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 59 of the Holy Quran:

“And nothing has prevented Us from sending signs [i.e., miracles] except that the former peoples denied them. And We gave Thamūd the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And We send not the signs except as a warning.”

This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 17:59, Page 104.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands

this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

Times of Ease

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that Allah, the Exalted, offered to turn the valley of Mecca into gold for him. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he desired to eat one day so he could be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, and be hungry the next day so he could show patience and humility to Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

The Will of Allah (SWT)

The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca sent two of their men to meet with the Jewish scholars of Medina in order to inquire about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they were the people who possessed the previous divine scriptures and were therefore more knowledgeable on this issue. The Jewish scholars informed them to test the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by asking him three questions. As the people of Mecca knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not study the previous scriptures at all he would only be able to answer the questions correctly if he was a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. The three questions were about the people of the cave, the king who travelled to the east and west and what he encountered and finally about the human soul. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was asked these questions he replied that he would answer them the next day but omitted the phrase "if Allah, the Exalted, so wills". The answers to these questions were revealed fifteen days later in the Holy Quran. This incident has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 350-352.

First of all, it is important to note that a delay in answering these questions was in fact a clear sign of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a liar would have answered the questions straight away in order to fool the people and achieve their worldly desires as soon as possible. The fact that there was a delay proved that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was most eager in guiding the people to Islam yet the answers were delayed in order to correct his omitting of the phrase "if Allah, the Exalted, so wills" and to prove his truthfulness.

In addition, this incident indicates the importance of understanding that nothing in creation occurs without the will of Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, they are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But they are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

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

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

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the

Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

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

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

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

Steadfast Bravery

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the bravest of men. The non-Muslims of Mecca once physically assaulted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and it was Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who defended him by striking one of them, restraining another one and throwing down another. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 13.

He was the bravest of men as he remained steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, without weakness.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly

believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants.
Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Torturing of the Believers in Mecca

Difficult Tests

When the aggression of the non-Muslims of Mecca increased they began to attack the defenseless and socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They imprisoned them, verbally and physically tortured them, deprived them of food and water and subjected them to extreme forms of persecution. For example, Bilal Bin Rabah, may Allah be pleased with him, was the slave of a non-Muslim of Mecca, Umayya Bin Khalaf. Umayya would force Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him, to lie on the burning hot sand and then place a huge rock on his chest in order to coerce him into abandoning Islam. But Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him, remained firm on Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 356-357.

Muslims should be grateful that Allah, the Exalted, does not require them to face such horrendous trials like the ones faced by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Nor is Allah, the Exalted, subjecting Muslims to face the tests and difficulties as the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, faced. They sacrificed their wealth, homes, families and lives. Instead, Allah, the Exalted, has entrusted Muslims with a few obligatory duties which require little sacrifice of their time, energy and wealth. If one ponders over the greatness of Paradise they will realise the sacrifices they have been encouraged to make are very small compared to the promised reward. Therefore, Muslims should show gratitude for this by submitting obediently to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions,

face destiny with patience and use the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him.

Granting Concessions

After accepting Islam, Ammar Bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, was persecuted and tortured by his owner. He was so brutally tortured that he was forced to utter words of disbelief in order to save himself from it. When he informed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of what occurred, the latter asked him about the state of his spiritual heart. When Ammar, may Allah be pleased with him, confirmed his heart was sure in faith then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to repeat his actions if it meant saving his life. It was in respect to him that chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 106, was revealed:

“Whoever disbelieves in [denies] Allāh after his belief, except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allāh, and for them is a great punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 399-401.

Through his example, Allah, the Exalted, granted ease and a concession to people facing similar hardships. Generally speaking, this indicates the easy nature of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 39, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that religion is simple and straight forward. And a Muslim should not over burden themselves as they will not be able to keep up with it.

This means that a Muslim should always lead a simple religious and worldly life. Islam does not demand Muslims to overburden themselves in performing righteous deeds. But it in fact teaches simplicity which is the most beloved religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. A Muslim should firstly strive to fulfil their obligatory duties which are undoubtedly within their strength to fulfil as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a Muslim with more than they can bear. This is confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286 of the Holy Quran:

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

Next, they should take some time out of their day to study Islamic teachings so that they can act on the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to their strength. This attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted, which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

If a Muslim persists on this behaviour they will be provided with such mercy that they will fulfil all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and find time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excess, waste or extravagance.

This is how a Muslim makes things easier for themselves. And if they possess dependents, such as children, they should teach them the same thereby, making things easier for them also. Overburdening oneself makes things hard and can push one to completely quit. And relaxing too much will make things hard as one will lose out on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds through laziness.

Faith Comes First

When Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam, his non-Muslim mother vowed not to eat or drink until he renounced his faith. Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, was very dutiful to his mother yet his love and care for her did not cause him to compromise on his faith. After some days past, he warned her that even if she died 100 times over he would still not renounce his faith. When she observed his steadfast character she broke her vow. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 8:

“And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 402.

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

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

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

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

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

lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Helping the Weak

When the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were being violently persecuted by the non-Muslims of Mecca, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, aided them by purchasing and freeing the male and female slaves who had accepted Islam, such as Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been specifically mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3754. In addition, the following verses of the Holy Quran were revealed because of his pious actions. Chapter 92 Al Layl, verses 5-7:

“As for he who gives and fears Allah. And believes in the best [reward]. We will ease him toward ease.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 357-358.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a Muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

In addition, it is important to understand that there are other forms of slavery people fall into which Muslims should aid them in, such as financial slavery through debts. This includes helping others pay off their debts to other people or making things easy when a Muslim is owed a debt from another. In fact, the one who waves a debt they are owed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be relieved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225.

Commanding Evil and Forbidding Good

The non-Muslim leader, Abu Jahl, was the one who incited the non-Muslims of Mecca to attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. When he heard of a man of status and influence who had accepted Islam he would criticise, insult and accuse him of abandoning the rightly guided practices of their forefathers. He would strive to deprecate their value in society, criticise their opinions and aim to destroy their reputation. If the Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, was a merchant, he would encourage others to boycott doing business with them. If the Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, was socially weak, Abu Jahl would physically torture them and encourage others to do the same. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 358.

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

Conclusion of Tests

After accepting Islam Khabbab Bin Aratt, may Allah be pleased with him, was persecuted and tortured by the non-Muslims of Mecca. For example, they would light a fire and force him to lie on it. Khabbab, may Allah be pleased with him, remained firm on Islam despite the difficulties he faced. He once complained to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the great physical torture they were facing and requested him to pray to Allah, the Exalted, for aid. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged him to be patient by mentioning the difficulties faced by the believers of previous nations. For example, the previous believers were tortured in such a way that a metal comb would be passed over their skin in order to tear it off from their bones yet they would not renounce their faith in Allah, the Exalted. Another would have a saw placed on their head and it would split their body into two parts yet they would not renounce their faith in Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, concluded that Allah, the Exalted, would surely eventually grant them victory. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3852.

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for Muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day Muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient

with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many Muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, Muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid Muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”

Standard for Women

The first martyr of Islam was in fact a woman, Sumayya Bint Khabbat, may Allah be pleased with her. She was heavily tortured by the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca but refused to renounce Islam and as a result she was martyred. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 358.

The Holy Quran has made it clear that the most honourable and superior person is the one who possesses the most piety. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you..."

This is when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman namely, one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other examples. But the point to note is that women should not be bothered

about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it then they will be superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior to whom. And it is clear from this verse that it is not only restricted to men. If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female Muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women and as a result they became better than the vast majority of men and women. Even if Muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety. This is quite evident when one observes the news and those who behave as they please and it will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a Muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety not in arguing and debates.

Stubbornness

Even though many of the non-Muslims understood and believed in the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they rejected and violently opposed him out of sheer stubbornness and envy. For example, a non-Muslim leader of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once listened to the Holy Quran from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and was visibly impressed by it. As he was a master in Arabic poetry, he knew the Holy Quran was not poetry and instead believed it was special and unique. He even admitted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was extremely graceful and had achieved greater intellectual and moral heights than anyone else. This he admitted privately to Abu Jahl, another non-Muslim leader of Mecca. Abu Jahl insisted that Walid Bin Mughira publicly denounce Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead of admitting the truth his stubbornness and envy encouraged him to publicly accuse the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of sorcery. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 361.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 11-24:

"Leave Me with the one I created alone. And to whom I granted extensive wealth. And children present [with him]. And spread [everything] before him, easing [his life]. Then he desires that I should add more. No! Indeed, he has been toward Our verses obstinate. I will cover him with arduous torment. Indeed, he thought and deliberated. So may he be destroyed [for]

how he deliberated. Then may he be destroyed [for] how he deliberated. Then he considered [again]. Then he frowned and scowled. Then he turned back and was arrogant. And said, "This is not but magic imitated [from others]."

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 74:11-24, Pages 160-161.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

In addition, this event highlights the importance of avoiding the major sin of envy. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Plotting Evil Plans

One of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, Walid Bin Mughira, once held a meeting with the other non-Muslim leaders during the time of the Holy Pilgrimage. The Holy Pilgrimage did exist before the coming of Islam but the correct practices of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been completely changed. He advised the other leaders that soon many people would enter Mecca because of the Holy Pilgrimage and they will come across the message of Islam so they needed to unanimously agree on what to say about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to deter people from accepting Islam. Someone advised that they should label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a soothsayer. But Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not a soothsayer as he did not possess any of their crazy characteristics therefore people would not accept this. Another advised that they should tell people the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was crazy and was possessed by evil spirits. But Walid replied that it was obvious this was not true as these signs were not apparent in him. Finally, someone advised to label the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a poet so that people would not pay attention to what he says. But again Walid replied that it was obvious that the Holy Quran or his speech were not poetry as the Arabs were masters of poetry. Walid advised everyone to claim that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a sorcerer whose goals were to cause separation between people and their religion and divisions within families. After agreeing to this plan they dispersed and waited for people to flood into Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage and warned them not to pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they claimed he was a sorcerer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 362.

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

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

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

In addition, this incident indicates the importance of always gathering with others for the sake of good and not evil. This is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when Muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a Muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Perceiving Positively

When the sons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died and he was left with only daughters, the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca insulted him by claiming his lineage had been cut-off and his name would be forgotten after his death. As a result, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 108 Al Kawthar, verses 1-3:

“Indeed, We have granted you an abundant of good. So pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice [to Him alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.”

This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 108:1-3, Page 166.

These verses teach Muslims to always look at situations in a positive way as Allah, the Exalted, did not direct the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to demonstrate patience at the loss of his sons. Instead, He directed him to show gratitude for the other countless blessings He had granted him.

It is important for Muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse.

If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a Muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds Muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To conclude, a Muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

Be Neutral

A nobleman from the non-Muslims of Mecca, Utba Bin Rabia, once spoke to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about compromising on his mission. As a response the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, recited some verses of the Holy Quran to him. Utba then returned to the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca and was visibly affected by what he heard. He told them that the Holy Quran was unique, it was not poetry or sorcery. He then advised them to stay away from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his business as he believed the Holy Quran would affect the whole of Arabia. He added, that if the other non-Muslims of Arabia destroyed Islam then that would solve their problem but if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gained dominance then they would share in that, as they were his relatives who abstained from harming him and his mission. But the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca rejected his advice. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 365-366.

Utba's advice indicates the importance of remaining neutral towards others, especially if one does not desire to aid others in their cause.

Generally speaking, Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality

towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

Misguiding Others

One of the nobleman of the non-Muslims of Mecca, Nadr Bin Harith, would purchase female singers who would, through their charms and songs, entice people away from listening to and accepting the call of Islam. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 31 Luqman, verse 6:

“And of the people is he who buys the amusement of speech to mislead [others] from the way of Allāh without knowledge and who takes it [His way] in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 91.

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

It is important for Muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A Muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming

they are only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

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

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

Commanding Evil

The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca went to great lengths to harm the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and Islam. Abu Lahab, the non-Muslim uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was particularly evil. He once commanded both his sons to divorce their wives, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, may Allah be pleased with them, the two daughters of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abu Lahab disrupted and ruined the marriages of his two sons just to harm the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 93.

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

Misguiding Friends

Once three noblemen from the non-Muslims of Mecca, Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan and Akhnas Bin Shariq, spent the night secretly listening to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reciting the Holy Quran. They were even hidden from each other and only realized what the others had done when they headed for their homes at dawn. They rebuked each other and commanded each other not to repeat their actions as this would only give the impression that Islam was the truth. But none of them stuck to their advice and repeated the same thing the next night and the night after that. On the third night, they once again criticized each other and urged each other to make a promise not to repeat their behaviour. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Pages 366-367.

If they were not such bad companions to each other, perhaps they would have accepted the truth, then and there. Therefore, this indicates the importance of avoiding bad companionship.

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

person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Worldly Competition

The non-Muslim leader of Mecca and uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, was once asked what his honest opinion was regarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran. He replied that he knew Islam was the truth but commented that his tribe and the tribe of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had always been rivals for social status. They would compete in feeding the poor, helping people, giving charity and other social things. But when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced Prophethood his tribe could not compete with that. So because of this worldly competition he swore to never accept the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though he knew he was telling the truth. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 367.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 33:

"We know that you are saddened by what they say. And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allāh that the wrongdoers reject."

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 6:33, Pages 75-76.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the Muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of Muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the Muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the Muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the Muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some Muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such

as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for Muslims. What he feared was that Muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true Muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that Muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a Muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow Muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a Muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the Muslims today.

If Muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

Forbearance

The non-Muslim uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, once publicly supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, that if Islam was the truth from Him, then he should rain down stones on them or bring upon them a painful punishment. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Anfal, verses 32-33:

“And [remember] when they said, "O Allah, if this should be the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment." But Allah would not punish them [i.e. complete destruction] while you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4649.

Generally speaking, it is important to understand a principle in Islam. The punishment of Allah, the Exalted, is not always apparent to people, such as stones raining down from the sky. Often the punishment is so subtle that the wrong doer may even struggle to understand that they are being punished for their persistent disobedience. An example of this is facing mental and emotional problems such as stress, anxiety and depression.

In addition, completely destroying a stubborn and evil nation before the message has been delivered completely and before the Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, is commanded to leave his nation is against the tradition of Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

A Lasting Challenge

The non-Muslims of Mecca spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and full-well knew he was no liar or madman. As they were masters of the Arabic language they full-well knew that the Holy Quran was not the words of a man or Jinn. But they could not openly declare this truth and instead claimed the author was either the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or someone else. Allah, the Exalted, on more than one occasion laid down a challenge to them to produce anything similar to the Holy Quran. As hard as they tried they could never do it, nor can anyone else. 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.”

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.”

Greed for Authority and Wealth

One of the major reasons the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite being convinced of their truthfulness, was due to their greed for authority and wealth. The leaders were well known within the Arabian Peninsula which led to business opportunities and other ways of obtaining wealth. They feared that they would lose both of these if they accepted Islam. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 57:

“And they [the Quraysh] say, “If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be swept from our land.” Have We not established for them a safe sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from Us? But most of them do not know.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith

found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of

Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Sincere to the Truth

Prior to accepting Islam, Dimaad, may Allah be pleased with him, was considered a witch doctor who could heal people who were affected by black magic. When he heard the non-Muslims of Mecca accusing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of being affected by black magic, he decided to cure him. When he found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and offered his services, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, ask His help; and he whom Allah guides aright there is none to lead him astray, and he who is led astray there is none to guide him, and I bear testimony to the fact that there is no god but Allah, He is One, having no partner with Him, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger." Dimaad, may Allah be pleased with him, asked him to repeat his statement and after doing so three times, Dimaad, may Allah be pleased with him, responded that these were not the words of a soothsayer, magician or poet. He then accepted Islam. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2008.

Dimaad, may Allah be pleased with him, did not ask about complicated or deep spiritual issues which amazed him nor was he shown any miracle to convince him of the truthfulness of Islam, yet he submitted to the truth and completely changed his belief, behaviour and way of life. This is because he was someone who accepted the truth. When one adopts sincerity by declaring that they will accept the truth and follow it to the best of their ability, even if it contradicts their desires, then even the simplest of truths, the truths overlooked by others, will completely change them. Whereas, the one who comes to Allah, the Exalted, with a cherry-picking attitude and only accepts and follows the things which please them and ignores the things which challenge their desires will never correctly submit to the truth, even if they are Muslim. It is because of this sincerity that many people in history accepted Islam after encountering the simplest of things

and not through deep spiritual experiences. It is this sincerity Muslims must strive to adopt, as following Islam correctly cannot be achieved without it.

Patiently Facing Circumstances

When the aggression of the non-Muslims of Mecca increased they began to attack the defenseless and socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Even though some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, urged the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight, he commanded them to withhold from fighting and to instead forgive their oppressors. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 416.

One of the wisdoms behind taking a peaceful stance against the non-Muslims of Mecca was to train the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt patience when dealing with people and difficulties. They were being trained to accept the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if it contradicted their point of view.

Fighting the non-Muslims of Mecca would have given them a greater reason to use lethal force against the Muslims, even against those Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were under tribal protection. This would have diverted the mission of Islam from preaching to fighting.

Fighting within Mecca would have led to the killing of innocent people who were not directly involved in the aggression shown towards the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Fighting and killing the non-Muslims of Mecca would have also sealed their fate in Hell. Being patient allowed many of these violent non-Muslims to accept Islam, such as Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him.

Fighting and killing the non-Muslims of Mecca would have enraged their relatives who may have been inclined towards accepting Islam. The feeling of revenge may have overcome their inclination towards Islam thereby preventing them from accepting it.

Showing patience in the face of aggression also encouraged some of the powerful non-Muslims to extend protection to their Muslim relatives, out of tribal loyalty. This would have disappeared if the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began to fight against the non-Muslims of Mecca.

Fighting would have only depleted the number of Muslims, which were needed to spread the message of Islam across the Arabian Peninsula.

Fighting against the non-Muslims would have also been used as false propaganda against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him, as he would have been accused of seeking nothing but authority in the land. History has shown that many of those who only sought power quickly turned to violence.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were being trained to stick together during this time of patience, thereby strengthening their unity.

There are many other reasons and wisdoms behind why Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to fight during his life in Mecca.

The First Migration to Ethiopia

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, departed leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, this event which discusses the migration of some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to Ethiopia.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

Feeling Empathy

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, departed, leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2.

When a group from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were heading out of Mecca, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who was still a non-Muslim at the time, questioned their activities. They told him they were leaving Mecca as they were fed up of him and the other non-Muslims who were constantly persecuting them. Instead of showing his typical harshness, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke some kind words which gave them the impression he would miss them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 49-50.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was harsh with them yet his harshness was not rooted in evil rather, it was rooted in a misplaced loyalty to the non-Muslims of Mecca and their misguided ways. It seems, he only behaved the way he did as he desired his people to be united, as they were before the coming of Islam.

Generally speaking, having this type of empathy for others is an important aspect of Islam. It was most likely the first emotion which encouraged Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to rethink his attitude towards Islam, as his behaviour was driving away his own people from their homes. Whereas, many of the other non-Muslims of Mecca were only concerned about protecting their way of life out of greed for wealth and authority and therefore, they rejoiced over the departing Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

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

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their

offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

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

Sacrificing for Faith

Prior to accepting Islam, Mus'ab Bin Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, was from a wealthy family and therefore lived a life of luxury. After accepting Islam his family captured and imprisoned him until he managed to escape and migrate to Ethiopia with some of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. He later returned to Mecca and because of his strong faith led a life of poverty for the rest of his life. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, *Hayatus Sahabah*, Volume 1, Page 312.

In a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent

if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the

Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Problems for the Believers in Ethiopia

Negativity

After some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, migrated to Ethiopia, the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca dispatched two of their men to the king of Ethiopia in order to create problems between him and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They attempted to fill the heart of the king with enmity and dislike for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, through lies. As the king of Ethiopia was Christian, they attempted to show that Islam was disrespecting the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her. But when the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were questioned, they spoke the truth and recited the Holy Quran to the king, who after hearing it accepted the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He allowed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to live in peace in his land and treated them with respect and kindness. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 5-6.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others as this causes ill feelings towards them in people's hearts.

It is often observed that families especially, from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one of the biggest complaints family members, such as parents often have. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another they will get affected by it even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly none the less it still affects their hearts. If one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson for example, if a mother desires to teach one of her children not to behave as their sibling did they then should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, Muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publically. Otherwise, they may well find as time passes their family becomes separated and emotionally distant from one another.

A Call to Goodness

After some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, migrated to Ethiopia, the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca dispatched two of their men to the king of Ethiopia in order to create problems between him and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They attempted to fill the heart of the king with enmity and dislike for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, through lies. As the king of Ethiopia was Christian, they attempted to show that Islam was disrespecting the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her. But when the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were questioned, they spoke the truth and recited the Holy Quran to the king, who after hearing it accepted the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He allowed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to live in peace in his land and treated them with respect and kindness. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 5-6.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke the following words to the king of Ethiopia regarding Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been recorded in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 58-59.

He said, "O king! We were plunged in the depths of ignorance and we were idolaters. We used to eat corpses, to commit abominations, to severe blood ties, to neglect our duties of hospitality and neighborliness and to use only the law of the strong. That was our life until Allah, the

Exalted, raised among us a man whose lineage, truthfulness, honesty and purity we knew well...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2016, the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, described some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She advised that he was neither obscene nor loud-mouthed. He never replied evil with evil and instead forgave and overlooked the faults of others.

First of all, all Muslims must understand that it is a duty on them to adopt the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

And Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

A Muslim must never act or speak in an obscene way as this is hated by Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 464. Behaving in this manner is the very essence of bad character. And as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can predict the evil outcome of the one who reaches the Day of Judgment as an obscene person. In addition, the one who is obscene in speech is much more likely to enter Hell as it only takes a single obscene word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. Put simply, true faith and obscenity can never gather in a single heart.

A Muslim should not be loud-mouthed as this leads to the loss of respect from others especially, one's relatives. The loud-mouthed often comes across aggressive and can easily frighten others which contradicts the behavior of a true Muslim. A Muslim must be gentle and kind when conversing with others as this shows the true and peaceful nature of Islam. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 19:

"...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys."

Finally, a Muslim must understand that as people are not perfect they are bound to make mistakes. Just like a person desires to be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, they should overlook and pardon others. Put simply, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. It is

foolishness not to forgive others yet expect the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: “...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) called us to the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and taught us not to associate anything with Him. He forbade us the worship of idols...”

The essence of this is sincerity to Allah, the Exalted.

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

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told

on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to speak the truth..."

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to be faithful to our trusts..."

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

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

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

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

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to be merciful..."

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.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to regard the rights of the neighbours..."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6014, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was encouraged to treat neighbours kindly to such an extent that he thought that a neighbour would become an heir of every Muslim.

Unfortunately, this duty is often neglected even though treating one's neighbour kindly is an important aspect of Islam. First of all, it is important to note that a person's neighbour in Islam includes all those people who are living within forty houses in each direction to a Muslim's home. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, Number 109.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A Muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbour. In fact, a Muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. A Muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour's property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person, such as financial or emotional support.

A Muslim should always conceal the faults of their neighbours. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publically disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to regard the rights of kith and kin..."

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

"And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives

in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately,

some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined us to refrain from crimes and bloodshed..."

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing

to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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

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

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

people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to offer prayers..."

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

"And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms..."

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma’un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter

Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

"[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed."

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families must encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to render alms..."

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

"And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection..."

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not let it rain at all. This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A Muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...He (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to observe fasts..."

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

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

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

"...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing..."

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

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

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

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

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents

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

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

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: “...We have believed in him (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) have accepted his teachings and have followed him. We have allowed what he has allowed and have prohibited what he has prohibited...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, also said: "...We have believed in him (Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) have accepted his teachings and have followed him. We have allowed what he has allowed and have prohibited what he has prohibited. For this reason our people attacked us, and persecuted us in order to force us to abandon the worship of Allah, the Exalted, and return to the worship of idols and to regard as lawful the evil deeds we once committed. When they had tortured and encircled our lives until finding no safety among them we have come to your country and hope you will protect us from oppression while we are with you, O king!"

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

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

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

Correcting False Beliefs

After some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, migrated to Ethiopia, the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca dispatched two of their men to the king of Ethiopia in order to create problems between him and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They attempted to fill the heart of the king with enmity and dislike for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, through lies. As the king of Ethiopia was Christian, they attempted to show that Islam was disrespecting the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her. But when the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were questioned, they spoke the truth and recited the Holy Quran to the king, who after hearing it accepted the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He allowed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to live in peace in his land and treated them with respect and kindness. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 5-6.

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 Gods. 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.

Divine Protection

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, departed leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, also decided to migrate so that he could worship Allah, the Exalted, in peace. According to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3905. When he reached a certain distance from Mecca, he met a non-Muslim nobleman from Mecca, Ibn Ad Daghina. When the two spoke Ibn Ad Daghina commented that a fine person like him should not be forced to leave his homeland. Ibn Ad Daghina went on to narrate some of the noble traits of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, which included: his eagerness to help the needy and poor.

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.

Ibn Ad Daghina went on to narrate some of the noble traits of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, which included: maintaining the ties of kinship.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A Muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A Muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Ibn Ad Daghina went on to narrate some of the noble traits of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, which included: helping the grief-stricken person.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties is guaranteed for all this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A Muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient

throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not have to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

Finally, it is important Muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Ibn Ad Daghina then encouraged Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, to return to Mecca where he would offer him his protection from the non-Muslims of Mecca. When they both returned, the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca agreed to the demands of Ibn Ad Daghina but insisted that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, pray and worship Allah, the Exalted, in the privacy of his own home and not in public. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, agreed but built a Mosque in the front of his home where he prayed and recited the Holy Quran which could be heard by passersby. When the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca challenged Ibn Ad Daghina over this, he requested Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, to either worship Allah, the Exalted, privately or release him from his promise of protection. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him,

released him and instead sought protection from Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds.

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.

A Lesson in Gratitude

Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from Ethiopia with a delegation sent by the king of Ethiopia. When this delegation reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he arose in order to personally serve them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to remain seated and allow them to serve the delegation. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that as they honored his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, he desired to repay them by serving them personally. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 19.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing

and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

The Right Path

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once observed the non-Muslims of Mecca worshipping idols. He criticized them and stated that their ancestors, the Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them, did not behave in this manner and were both Muslims (those who submitted to Allah, the Exalted). The non-Muslims responded that they worshipped the idols out of love for Allah, the Exalted, and so that they bring them closer to Him. As a response Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 3:31, Page 32.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Defending the Truth

Abu Jahl once harmed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was not yet Muslim, became enraged when he heard his brother had harmed their nephew, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, he attacked Abu Jahl and wounded him and then openly declared his acceptance of Islam. The Muslims became much stronger the day Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 1, Pages 282-283.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 122:

“And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 6:122, Page 79.

This reminds Muslims that whenever they encounter anything which drives them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted,

which can come in the form of the Devil, one's inner Devil and other people they should remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. One should never act to please these enemies if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as no matter what they obtain in this way it will become a great regret and burden for them in both worlds. One should firmly remember that whether they immediately observe it or not Allah, the Exalted, will protect the one who obeys Him even if it displeases these enemies. Whereas, these enemies will not protect them from the anger and punishment of Allah, the Exalted.

Truly remembering that one will be held accountable for every action they perform can aid a Muslim in remaining steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. An element of this success is constantly remembering Allah, the Exalted. This does not only include remembering Him through one's tongue but more importantly through actions as outlined earlier. This practical remembrance will ward off these enemies who strive to lead Muslims astray. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 36:

“And if there comes to you from Satan an evil suggestion, then seek refuge in Allah...”

It is important to note, this verse declares one should remember Allah, the Exalted, much meaning; they must strive to fulfil all the duties imposed on them by Allah, the Exalted, not cherry pick which ones suit their desires. Nor should they be lazy by occasionally fulfilling them. This Muslim will not obtain the full protection of Allah, the Exalted, from these enemies and are therefore more susceptible to being led astray.

Truly remembering Allah, the Exalted, as mentioned earlier is the key to overcoming all worldly and religious difficulties in both worlds. This has been indicated at the end of the main verse under discussion.

Ignorance and its People

While the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was preaching Islam openly in Mecca, 20 learned Christians came to him and questioned him about Islam. After answering their questions and reciting the Holy Quran to them they accepted Islam as they recognized the signs of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which were recorded in their divine scriptures. When they arose to leave him the non-Muslim leader of Mecca, Abu Jahl, blocked their path and insulted them by claiming that they had abandoned their correct faith. They simply replied that they would not insult him back and instead greeted him with peace and left him. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 52-55 of the Holy Quran:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it - they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them, they say, “We have believed in it; indeed, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed we were, [even] before it, Muslims [i.e., submitting to Allah].” Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured and [because] they avert evil through good, and from what We have provided them they spend. 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.””

This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 24-25.

This incident is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

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

Specifically, when people act in a foolish way they do not reply in the same way. Instead, they show patience and treat these people kindly which is shown through their speech and actions. They understand that the best response they can give a foolish person is to leave them in peace as replying to them in an evil way only spurs them on. This does not mean they do not defend themselves as Islam permits this but they have adopted humility without weakness. They do not wish to waste their time on people who are only looking for trouble. Ignorance is a disliked characteristic in Islam and is one of the reasons why seeking knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. The ignorant commit sins without even realising it therefore, the true servants of the Most Merciful avoid its people and this characteristic by dedicating time to studying the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and strive to adopt these teachings into their lives through actions. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 9:

“...Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"...”

The Holy Quran has made it clear that an ignorant person cannot attain true piety. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

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

This is because knowledge is required in order to adopt the good characteristics and avoid the evil traits advised in Islamic teachings. If one is unaware of an evil trait how can they avoid or remove it from their character?

One should not only strive to attain and act on Islamic knowledge but they should always maintain respect for those who possess knowledge as this keeps one away from pride.

The Holy Quran advises Muslims to turn away from the company of the ignorant as they can only inspire their friends towards pointless or evil things. 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.””

This does not mean one should not advise or teach the ignorant but this should be left to educated Muslims who have adopted the correct characteristics required to spread the message of Islam correctly.

The truly ignorant is not someone who lacks knowledge. In truth, the ignorant is someone who does not act on their knowledge. Such a person is ignorant even if they possess much knowledge. Acting on knowledge is knowledge which is beneficial. Everything else is only knowledge of the tongue which will not benefit its possessor. In actual fact this knowledge will testify against a person on Judgment Day. So Muslims should strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge and seek refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from knowledge which does not benefit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3843.

Umar Ibn Khattab (RA) Accepts Islam

Strengthening of Islam

Prior to accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was encouraged to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he left their meeting with his sword searching for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he met Nu'aym Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who attempted to direct his attention away from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He rebuked Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, by informing him that members of his own family had accepted Islam: his sister, brother-in-law and cousin. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then headed for his sister's house. He overheard them reciting the Holy Quran and after entering her house they initially denied what they were doing. Eventually, they defiantly declared their Islam even though it led to them being beaten by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Eventually, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, calmed down and requested his sister to show him what they were reciting. She commanded him to first wash himself, as he was unclean. After doing that, he took the paper that they were reciting and began to recite chapter 20 Taha of the Holy Quran. During his recitation the light of faith penetrated his spiritual heart. He then asked about the whereabouts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Khabbab Bin Aratt, may Allah be pleased with him, was hiding within the home, and after witnessing the truth penetrating the spiritual heart of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, he revealed himself and told him about the supplication of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made for his guidance or the guidance of Abu Jahl. This supplication has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3681. Umar, may Allah be

pleased with him, then headed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. When he reached the place, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were initially scared but let him in. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, seized him desiring to protect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but the latter commanded them to let him go. Then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, enquired about his intention, at which point Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, declared his Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 51-56.

It is obvious from the life of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that when he accepted Islam, he not only verbally declared faith in it but practically followed and obeyed its teachings. This must be the attitude of every Muslim.

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.

Acting on the Truth

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam he convinced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to pray openly at the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca, with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This was not possible to do before as their numbers, social power and influence was too small and weak. The non-Muslims of Mecca dared not to attack them when they saw Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, with them. After this the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the title of Al Farooq to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, meaning, the one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 63.

Muslims must strive to follow in his footsteps by adopting truthfulness in all aspects of their lives.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for

the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

Choosing a Different Path

After accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, visited his maternal uncle Abu Jahl. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told him that he had accepted Islam. Abu Jahl angrily returned into his home and slammed the door in his face. The same thing happened when he visited another noblemen from amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 57.

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

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their

people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

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

Protecting Yourself

As the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were socially weak, they could not pray at the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, until Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, became Muslim. When he became Muslim, he defended the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from harm and kept fighting the non-Muslims of Mecca until they left the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, alone. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 59.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever protects the honor of another will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

Just like a Muslim would desire others to protect their honor in their presence or absence they should protect the honor of others in their presence or absence also. In fact, loving for others what one desires for themselves is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. A Muslim should protect the honor of others when anyone else speaks ill about them, such as backbiting or slander, irrespective of if what they are saying is true or not. This is an aspect of concealing the faults of others which leads to Allah, the Exalted, concealing their faults in both worlds. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Behaving in such a manner is a clear proof of one's love for others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is a characteristic which leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2688.

The main Hadith under discussion clearly shows that a Muslim benefits from supporting others so even if they are too preoccupied from caring about others they should at least act in this manner for their own sake.

But the one who fails to defend the honor of others when they have the opportunity and strength to do so without fear of harm should fear that Allah, the Exalted, will not protect their honor in a time and place where it is being violated by others and especially, on the Day of Resurrection.

Finally, as the main Hadith under discussion advises protecting the honor of others it indirectly indicates the importance of not violating the honor of others. This is in fact the very sign of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Specifically, it advises that a true Muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

Guardianship of Allah (SWT)

Uthman Bin Madh'oon, may Allah be pleased with him, was heavily persecuted when he accepted Islam. He managed to migrate to Ethiopia but later returned when he was incorrectly informed that the situation in Mecca had improved for the Muslims.

In Mecca, some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were protected from the persecution of the non-Muslims because of their tribal affiliations. Uthman Bin Madh'oon, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of them, who had the protection of one of the leaders of the non-Muslims, Waleed Bin Mughiera. On one occasion, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, felt bad that he was being protected by a polytheist while his Muslim brothers and sisters were being persecuted for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As a result, he publicly absolved the protection Waleed had granted him. Shortly after he got into a fight with a non-Muslim and as a result his eye was injured. Waleed reminded him that this injury would not have occurred if he did not absolve the protection he extended him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, replied confidently that he was pleased to be hurt in the path of Allah, the Exalted, and was now in the protection of the One who is more honorable and powerful than Waleed, meaning, Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 413-415.

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Another Migration to Ethiopia

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who migrated to Ethiopia the first time were incorrectly informed that the situation in Mecca had become better for the Muslims. As a result, many of them decided to return to Mecca only to find that the opposite was true: the situation in Mecca had only become more difficult for the Muslims. After the violence and aggression of the non-Muslims increased against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they were permitted to migrate once again to Ethiopia. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 102.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while

acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

True Muslim and Believer

When the resistance and violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, intensified, the non-Muslim leaders openly decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, ordered his tribe to bring the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, into their area of Mecca and to protect him from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 27.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again,

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

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

Social Boycott

When the resistance and violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, intensified, the non-Muslim leaders openly decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, ordered his tribe to bring the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, into their area of Mecca and to protect him from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware of Abu Talib's plan they made a pact that they would not sit down with nor do business with nor enter the homes of the tribes that were protecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, until they surrendered him for execution. This social boycott carried on for three years during which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, and even the tribe of Abu Talib suffered greatly. Their markets had been cut off, no food was allowed into their area of Mecca and all their business dealings were disrupted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 27-28.

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

commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

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

In addition, whenever one invites others towards Islam, commands good and forbids evil they will be challenging the heedless lifestyle of many others which will inspire them to resist the truth anyway they can. The major reason all the past nations rejected their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, was due to this very reason. They could not abandon their lifestyles and characteristics and in defense of them were prepared to wage war against Allah, the Exalted, and their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. When one takes up this important duty they must be prepared to face many hardships caused by others including their own relatives. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they encountered countless difficulties from their nations.

One only needs to study the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to observe this fact. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one in creation had been persecuted in the path of Allah, the Exalted, more than him.

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

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

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

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

This is the reason one should not believe in propaganda as the group that were mistreated the most in this way were the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023.

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

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

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

Muslims must accept that they too will face hardships when spreading the word of Islam. Therefore, they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by remaining steadfast in the face of

difficulties. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. If one desires to join them in the next world they must adopt this attitude also.

Ties of Kinship

When the resistance and violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, intensified, the non-Muslim leaders openly decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, ordered his tribe to bring the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, into their area of Mecca and to protect him from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware of Abu Talib's plan they made a pact that they would not sit down with nor do business with nor enter the homes of the tribes that were protecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, until they surrendered him for execution. This social boycott carried on for three years during which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, and even the tribe of Abu Talib suffered greatly. Their markets had been cut off, no food was allowed into their area of Mecca and all their business dealings were disrupted. But at the start of the third year of the boycott, certain men belonging to the side of the non-Muslims of Mecca became critical of this pact and recognized that they were breaking the bonds of kinship and disregarding what was right. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 2, Pages 27-28.

Even though this criticism came from non-Muslims, none the less it is important for Muslims to understand the importance of maintaining the ties of kinship.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia

which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their

life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Rejecting the Obvious

When the resistance and violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, intensified, the non-Muslim leaders openly decided to murder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, ordered his tribe to bring the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, into their area of Mecca and to protect him from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware of Abu Talib's plan they made a pact that they would not sit down with nor do business with nor enter the homes of the tribes that were protecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, until they surrendered him for execution. This social boycott carried on for three years during which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, and even the tribe of Abu Talib suffered greatly. Their markets had been cut off, no food was allowed into their area of Mecca and all their business dealings were disrupted. But at the start of the third year of the boycott, certain men belonging to the side of the non-Muslims of Mecca became critical of this pact and recognized that they were breaking the bonds of kinship and disregarding what was right.

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, dispatched woodworms which attacked the document on which their evil pact was recorded on. They devoured everything making reference to their pact, all that remained in the document was related to polytheism, injustice and the breaking of ties of kinship. Allah, the Exalted, revealed this to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who in turn told his uncle Abu Talib. Abu Talib took some members of his clan and headed for the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, where the document had been placed. He

first spoke to the leaders of the non-Muslims and told them what had occurred with the document and added that if he was telling the truth they should accept this sign and break their pact. They agreed to this believing he was wrong but when the documents was retrieved they witnessed that Abu Talib was telling the truth. Even with this clear sign they not only refused to accept Islam but became even more violent against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 27-29.

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.

Friends

A non-Muslim leader of Mecca, Ubayy Bin Khalaf, once became enraged at his friend, Uqba Bin Abu Muayt, who once listened to the Holy Quran being recited by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ubayy demanded his friend to show disrespect to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or he would never even look at him again. Uqba did disrespect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of blind love for his friend. After this Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 25 Al Furqan, verses 27-28 of the Holy Quran:

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, “Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.””

This incident has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 35.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person

becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Argumentation

A non-Muslim, Ibn Zibarra, once claimed that if everything besides Allah, the Exalted, that is worshiped will go to Hell that means that the Angels they worshipped, and the Holy Prophets Uzayr and Eesa, peace be upon them, who were worshipped by some Jews and Christians, would also go to Hell. When this was reported to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he replied that all those wanting and demanding others to worship them besides Allah, the Exalted, will be in Hell with those who worshiped them. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 101-102 of the Holy Quran:

“Indeed, those for whom the best [reward] has preceded from Us - they are from it [Hell] far removed. They will not hear its sound, while they are, in that which their souls desire, abiding eternally.”

This verse is referring to the Holy Prophets Uzayr and Eesa, peace be upon them, and the Angels who were worshipped by some communities. And to indicate their argumentative and negative mindset chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verses 57-58 were revealed:

“And when the son of Mary was presented as an example, immediately your people laughed aloud. And they said, “Are our gods better, or is he?” They did not present it [i.e., the comparison] except for [mere] argument. But, [in fact], they are a people prone to dispute.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 34.

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.

Cooperation on Falsehood

Once the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, was making a circumambulation of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. During his act of worship he was obstructed by some of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca who claimed that it was best for everyone if they cooperated with each other by compromising on their beliefs. They would worship Allah, the Exalted, if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted to worship their idols. This way everyone would get along with no hostilities. After this, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 109 Al Kafirun, verses 1-6:

"Say, "O disbelievers. I do not worship what you worship. Nor are you worshippers of what I worship. Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship. Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.""

This incident is recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 35-36.

Muslims are not expected to make huge sacrifices like those made by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but they should not compromise on their faith for the sake of people or to gain worldly things. It is important to understand that no matter what worldly success a person gains through compromising on their faith eventually this success will become a curse and great burden

for them in both worlds. It is quite evident when one observes the media that those who compromised on their moral values and faith ended up sad and depressed irrespective of how much worldly success they obtained. So a Muslim should instead remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam and firmly believe, sooner or later, they will be blessed with worldly success beyond their expectations let alone the blessings which await them in the next world. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 30:

“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is Allah" and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], "Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.”

Islam for All

Once a highly respected non-Muslim leader of Mecca was conversing with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The latter was eager to convince him to accept Islam as it meant his whole tribe would follow him into Islam also. During their conversation a blind and poor companion, Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum, may Allah be pleased with him, unknowingly interrupted their conversation and desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to teach him more about Islam. As the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not desire to break off his conversation with the non-Muslim leader he temporarily turned away from the poor Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, and did not reply to him with the hope he would understand the importance of the situation and return later on. At this point Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 80 Abasa, verses 1-10:

“He [i.e., the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)] frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive that perhaps he might be purified. Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need. To him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge]. While he fears [Allah]. From him you are distracted.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 36.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their

footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

Kind and Gentle Preaching

When a respected and honoured man of the tribe of Daws, Tufayl Bin Amr, came into Mecca, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca warned him about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and insisted that he should not listen to him nor converse with him. He even stuffed cotton into his ears in order to avoid listening to the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But after he saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he used his common sense and deduced that if what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invites him to was good he would accept it but if it was bad he would simply reject it. After listening to the teachings of Islam he accepted it and returned to his tribe urging them to accept Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised him to preach to his tribe in a kind and gentle manner. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 48-49.

The beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

“...And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers...”

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned

in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

“And said, "I am your most exalted lord.””

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This

is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

Famine in Mecca

Mission of Mercy

When the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca escalated further against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, Allah, the Exalted, subjected Mecca to a severe famine. It was so bad that the non-Muslims were forced to eat carrion, leather and bones. Some of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stating that he claimed that his mission was a mercy for mankind so he should therefore pray for this famine to be removed from them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did pray for this and Mecca was blessed with profuse rain and the effects of the famine were removed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 59-60.

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.

Learning from Experiences

When the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca escalated further against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, Allah, the Exalted, subjected Mecca to a severe famine. It was so bad that the non-Muslims were forced to eat carrion, leather and bones. Some of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stating that he claimed that his mission was a mercy for mankind so he should therefore pray for this famine to be removed from them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did pray for this and Mecca was blessed with profuse rain and the effects of the famine were removed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 59-60.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 76:

“And We had gripped them with suffering [as a warning], but they did not yield to their Lord, nor did they humbly supplicate.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 23:76, Page 114.

It is important for a Muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A Muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when Muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a Muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

Equality in Islam

The Best Company

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always eager for people to accept Islam for their own sake. He was especially desirous for the leaders of the non-Muslims to do so as he knew their followers would more readily accept Islam if this occurred. When the non-Muslims of Mecca, who were considered noblemen, desired to converse with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about Islam they demanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to order his poor Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, away during their meetings as they did not desire to sit in the company of the poor. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, considered this, only out of eagerness for them to accept Islam, the following verses and similar ones were revealed: chapter 6 Al An'am, verses 52-54:

“And do not send away those who call upon their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His face [i.e., favor]. Not upon you is anything of their account and not upon them is anything of your account. So were you to send them away, you would [then] be of the wrongdoers. And thus We have tried some of them through others that they [i.e., the disbelievers] might say, "Is it these whom Allāh has favored among us?" Is not Allāh most knowing of those who are grateful? And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself - indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.””

This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 6:52, Page 76.

This incident indicates the importance of good companionship.

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

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

become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

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

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

Rejecting the Truth

The non-Muslims of Mecca desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to show them a miracle, other than the Holy Quran, in order to confirm his declaration. He showed them the splitting of the Moon. Even after this obvious sign they simply claimed he tricked their eyes. During this time chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 1-3, were revealed:

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic." And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 77-78 and a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3637, also discusses this event.

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.

Death of Abu Talib - Uncle of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

No Forcefulness in Religion

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, was on his deathbed, his non-Muslim relatives gathered at his house desiring him to encourage the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to compromise with them. But instead the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired and urged Abu Talib to accept Islam but he was constantly challenged by his relatives until Abu Talib died as a non-Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared he would continue asking forgiveness for him until he was prohibited from it by Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 113:

“It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire.”

And chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 56:

“Indeed, [O Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him], you do not guide whom you like...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 2, Pages 83-84 and a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 4772, also discusses this event.

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.”

Even though Abu Talib died as a non-Muslim his efforts in protecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were not wasted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once confirmed that because of him, Abu Talib, would reside in the shallow part of the Hell fire instead of in its deepest parts, which would have been the outcome because of his disbelief in Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, Number 510.

Death of Khadija (RA) - Wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

A Fine Companion

During these difficult years of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his beloved wife, Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, passed away. She had been his trusted adviser in all his troubles and he would always seek reassurance from her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 81.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once eulogized her when remembering her years later. He said that she believed in him when no one else did. She embraced Islam when people disbelieved in him. And she helped and comforted him in her person and wealth when there was none else to lend him a helping hand. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, 6/118.

There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a Muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real

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

Upholding Old Ties

After the death of the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, maintained ties with her family and friends. For example, he would often present them food and gifts. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3818.

The Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, were the best group ever created after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The fact they physically observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime is definitely one factor. But anyone who knows about their life and their righteous deeds understands that their superiority is due to more than just this unique and great deed.

One of the main reasons for their superiority is shown in a Hadith involving the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, which is found in Sahih Muslim, number 6515. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once riding on his conveyance in the desert when he came across a Bedouin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted the Bedouin, placed his turban on the Bedouin's head and insisted that the Bedouin ride on his conveyance. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was told that the greeting he gave the Bedouin was more than enough as the Bedouin would have been greatly pleased at the fact that the great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted him. Yet, Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and showed the Bedouin great respect.

Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he only did this because the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that one of the best ways a person can honour their parent is by showing love and respect to their parent's relatives and friends. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, added that the Bedouin's father was a friend of his father the Commander of the Faithful, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him.

This incident indicates the superiority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They completely submitted to the teachings of Islam. They not only fulfilled the obligatory duties and avoided all sins but completely fulfilled all acts which were recommended to them to the highest possible degree. Their submission caused them to put aside their own desires and only act to please Allah, the Exalted. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily ignored the Bedouin as none of the actions he done were obligatory yet, unlike many Muslims who would use this excuse, he completely submitted to the teachings of Islam and acted the way he did.

It is the lack of submission to the teachings of Islam which has weakened the faith of Muslims. Some only fulfil the obligatory duties and turn away from other righteous deeds, such as voluntary charity, which contradict their desires by claiming the actions are not obligatory. All Muslims desire to end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. But how is this possible if they do not follow their path or way? If a Muslim follows a path other than theirs then how can they end up with them? To end up with them one must follow their path. But this is only possible if one completely submits to the teachings of Islam like they did instead of cherry picking the deeds which suit their desires.

The Guardian

In a single year, both the beloved wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, and his uncle Abu Talib, passed away. She had been his trusted adviser in all his troubles and he would seek reassurance from her. And the death of his uncle, Abu Talib, meant he had lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The difficulties of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, greatly increased after these deaths. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. For example, they once poured dirt over his head. When he returned home, one of his daughters washed the dirt off while weeping. He told her not to cry as Allah, the Exalted, was his Protector. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 81.

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Neighbours

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, died, he lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. For example, the most harm directed at the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during this time was from his neighbours who were also his relatives. They would toss filthy things on him while he was in his house and even placed these things in his cooking pot. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never responded in kind and would instead carry the filth out of his home and dispose of it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 99.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6014, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was encouraged to treat neighbors kindly to such an extent that he thought that a neighbor would become an heir of every Muslim.

Unfortunately, this duty is often neglected even though treating one's neighbour kindly is an important aspect of Islam. First of all, it is important to note that a person's neighbour in Islam includes all those people who are living within forty houses in each direction to a Muslim's home. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, Number 109.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A Muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbor. In fact, a Muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. A Muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour's property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person, such as financial or emotional support.

A Muslim should always conceal the faults of their neighbors. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publically disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

Visiting Taif

Private Conversations

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, died, he lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. So he decided to visit the near city of Taif in order to call their people to Islam and seek their help against the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he met the leaders of Taif they insulted and ridiculed him. As he was leaving Taif, he requested them to keep their meeting and conversation a secret as he knew the non-Muslims of Mecca would only intensify their violence against him if they found out about it. But the leaders of Taif refused to even this act of common decency. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 99-100.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true Muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable when it is clearly not. A Muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret

unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would then doing this betrays them which contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins such as backbiting and gossiping and prevents negative feelings being developed for each other. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed about them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam such as the one declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

Accepting the Divine Decree

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, died, he lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. So he decided to visit the near city of Taif in order to call their people to Islam and seek their help against the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he met the leaders of Taif they insulted and ridiculed him. As he was leaving Taif, he requested them to keep their meeting and conversation a secret as he knew the non-Muslims of Mecca would only intensify their violence against him if they found out about it. But the leaders of Taif refused to even this act of common decency. In fact, they incited a crowd of people to revile, injure and chase him out of their city. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge in a garden from the mob. He spoke the following supplication at this time, "O Allah, I complain to You about my weakness and inadequacy before the people. O You Most Merciful of all, You who are Lord of the oppressed, You who are my Lord, to whom would You entrust me? To those far away who greet me with displeasure or to some enemy to whom You entrust me? As long as You are not angry with me I will not care but I would prefer your favour. I take refuge with the light of Your face that brightens the shadows, repairs the troubles of this world and the hereafter, ensuring that Your anger or discontent not alight upon me. May You be content and be pleased; all power and strength stem from You." This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 99-100.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a Muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a Muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Positivity

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, died, he lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. So he decided to visit the near city of Taif in order to call their people to Islam and seek their help against the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he met the leaders of Taif they insulted and ridiculed him. As he was leaving Taif, he requested them to keep their meeting and conversation a secret as he knew the non-Muslims of Mecca would only intensify their violence against him if they found out about it. But the leaders of Taif refused to even this act of common decency. In fact, they incited a crowd of people to revile, injure and chase him out of their city. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge in a garden from the mob. The garden belonged to two brothers, Utba and Shayba, who witnessed what had occurred and felt some compassion towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, they sent their servant, Addas, may Allah be pleased with him, to him with a tray of grapes. Addas, may Allah be pleased with him, was a Christian but after witnessing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, recite the name of Allah, the Exalted, before eating and after having a short conversation with him, he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 99-101.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not achieve his goal of finding support from the people of Taif, at least one person accepted Islam. Therefore, this indicates the importance of looking at things and situations from a positive mindset.

It is important for Muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse. If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a Muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds Muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To conclude, a Muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

Pardon and Overlook

When the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Talib, died, he lost a source of support and protection against the non-Muslims of Mecca. The physical violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against him greatly increased. So he decided to visit the near city of Taif in order to call their people to Islam and seek their help against the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he met the leaders of Taif they insulted and ridiculed him. As he was leaving Taif, he requested them to keep their meeting and conversation a secret as he knew the non-Muslims of Mecca would only intensify their violence against him if they found out about it. But the leaders of Taif refused to even this act of common decency. In fact, they incited a crowd of people to revile, injure and chase him out of their city. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge in a garden from the mob. Allah, the Exalted, sent the Angel of the mountains to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who offered to crush the city with two mountains. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, turned down the offer and instead commented that he hoped that the city would one day accept Islam and worship none except Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3231.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other

options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their

small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Repaying Favors

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned from Taif, he had to enter Mecca under the protection of a non-Muslim nobleman, Mut'im Ibn Adee, as the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were further enraged at the attempt of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to convert the people of Taif. Years later, after his victory at the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if Mut'im Ibn Adee was alive and interceded for the non-Muslim prisoners of war, he would have released all of them for free. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4024 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 534.

In a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was

created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

The Heavenly Journey

The All Mighty

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 61.

The first thing to note is that Muslims should never doubt the power of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to solving their problems and granting them a way out of difficulties. This Heavenly Journey sounds impossible yet it occurred as nothing is beyond the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. The condition for being granted a way out of all difficulties is sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining

from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

Striving for Certainty

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 66-68.

As indicated by the above verse, one of the main reasons the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted the Heavenly journey was to strengthen his faith through witnessing the signs of Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to strive to obtain certainty of faith.

All Muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a Muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some Muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-Muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the Muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

The Highest Rank

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 61.

This great event and the verse quoted indicate 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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

Company of the Greats

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was welcomed by numerous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, in the different levels of Heaven. For example, he met the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, in the first Heaven. He met the Holy Prophets Yahyah and Eesa, peace be upon them, in the second Heaven. He met the Holy Prophet Idris, peace be upon him, in the fourth Heaven. He met the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in the sixth Heaven and the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in the seventh Heaven. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 66.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah

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

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Life is a Mirror

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was welcomed by numerous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, in the different levels of Heaven. He met the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and observed him leaning against the House of Allah, the Exalted, in the seventh Heaven, the Bayt Al Mamur. This House of Allah, the Exalted, is directly above His house in Mecca, the Kaaba. The Bayt Al Mamur is so sacred that each day 70,000 Angels worship Allah, the Exalted, therein and circumambulate it and they will not have the opportunity to do this again until Judgement Day. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 66.

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

remember the person who remembers Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152.

“So remember Me; I will remember you.”

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

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

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

And similarly this incident indicates how the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was granted a station near the house of Allah, the Exalted, the Bayt Al Mamur, located in the seventh Heaven as he strived hard to build and establish the house of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca thousands of years ago. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], “Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.”

In addition, this discussion is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A

person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

Addressing More Important Issues

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

Scholars have debated for many generations whether the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was blessed with physically observing Allah, the Exalted, or the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, in his true form during the Heavenly Journey. Both sides have presented proves supporting their views. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 66-68.

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, believing one way or the other 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 this issue 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.

The Obligatory Prayers

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 213, discusses a specific part of the Heavenly Journey. This is when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was gifted the obligatory prayers. The fact that this was the only obligatory duty which was given in this way, while the rest were revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was on Earth, shows the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. This specific Hadith advises that initially fifty obligatory prayers were commanded and step by step they were reduced until five remained. If a Muslim had to perform fifty obligatory prayers every day it would prevent them from doing anything else. This shows the importance of the obligatory prayers. It teaches Muslims that the obligatory prayers must be the centre of their life. One should mould their life around their obligatory prayers and not mould their duties around their life.

In addition, the obligatory prayers are an indication of how one should attach to Allah, the Exalted, while detaching from the material world. A Muslim praying is not allowed to talk, eat or do other normal lawful things during the prayer. This indicates the importance of one connecting to Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Being initially commanded to fulfil fifty daily obligatory prayers reminds Muslims that this obedience and connection to Allah, the Exalted, should be their top priority and all other things should be placed in their rightful place according to the teachings of Islam. This is the true purpose of mankind. Their purpose is not to strive to for the unnecessary and vain things of this material world. This material world is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. It is not a permanent home. The obligatory prayers and this great event remind Muslims of this fact. Therefore, they should strive in crossing this bridge

according to the teachings of Islam so that they can reach the hereafter safely.

Abu Bakkar (RA) - The Champion of the Truth

Sincerity to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

During his final years in Mecca before migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was taken on the miraculous Heavenly Journey. He was taken first to Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem and then up to the seven Heavens during a small part of the night. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs...”

On his return, he informed the people of Mecca of his Heavenly Journey. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, provided the non-Muslims of Mecca with many details proving this journey took place. For example, he gave a detailed description of Masjid Al Aqsa, which was impossible, as he never journeyed there before, something the non-Muslims knew. He described in detail a travelling caravan which was heading to Mecca and arrived exactly when he told them it would. He mentioned some other travelers who he encountered on the way back to Mecca and described their belongings in detail. But the stubbornness of the non-Muslims of Mecca was too great and they therefore rejected him and this event. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As

Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 551-552.

The non-Muslims of Mecca tried to convince the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to renounce Islam as they believed this journey was impossible. But Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, simply replied that believing in this journey was a small issue as he believed in greater things which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informed him about, such as divine revelation. This is when he was granted the title of As Siddique, meaning, the truthful one. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 63.

Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, demonstrated true sincerity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Preaching Islam to Different Tribes

Gentle Persistence

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained steadfast on his mission and invited all he encountered towards Islam. He visited many tribes and clans in order to spread the message of Islam. The vast majority, during the early days of Islam, rejected his invitation. For example, he visited the tribe of Kinda, the tribe of Kalb, the tribe of Hanifa and many others. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 105.

The one who desires to spread the word of Islam should strive to frequently remind others of good. People can become heedless quickly therefore, reminding them consistently is important. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 51:

“And We have [repeatedly] conveyed to them the word [i.e., the Qur’ān] that they might be reminded.”

Just like students who revise their notes repeatedly in order to reinforce its knowledge into their minds one will benefit from being frequently reminded of the true word of Islam. One should not just offer good advice

once and then give up. Repeating good words is like continuous drops of water which with time penetrates the toughest of structures. This is the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, and all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command Muslims to establish the obligatory prayers once yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran.

The Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, spent approximately 950 years continuously spreading the word of faith to his people. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 14:

“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used every moment to spread the word of Islam and even in his last moments advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, to adhere to Islamic teachings. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2697. Therefore, one should adopt this attitude and not fall prey to the whisperings of the Devil by giving up offering advice after a few occasions. The duty of a Muslim who invites others to Islam is to do it consistently but whether this effects the hearts of the people is out of their control.

But it is important to stress there is a difference between being regular and hounding others. A Muslim should not constantly command others to good as this can become overbearing and burdensome for others. In fact,

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refrained from giving too many lectures as he did not want the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, becoming bored and overburdened. This is why the Companion, Abdullah Bin Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, only gave lectures on Thursdays even though he was requested to give more. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7127.

A Good Intention

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained steadfast on his mission and invited all he encountered towards Islam. He visited many tribes and clans in order to spread the message of Islam. The vast majority, during the early days of Islam, rejected his invitation. For example, he visited the tribe of Kinda, the tribe of Kalb, the tribe of Hanifa and many others. The tribal leaders of Kinda did pay attention to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They questioned that if they accepted his message and aided him in his mission and Allah, the Exalted, granted him victory, would he bestow power and authority on them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that power always rests with Allah, the Exalted, and He places it wherever He wishes. Meaning, he was not in a position to guarantee them positions of authority if they aided him. After hearing this response they rejected his call to Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 106.

Many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives were granted success even if they were not Muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases their bad intention is quite evident as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a woman's intelligence, good character and inner strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Misguiding Companions

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained steadfast on his mission and invited all he encountered towards Islam. He visited many tribes and clans in order to spread the message of Islam. The vast majority, during the early days of Islam, rejected his invitation. During the festivals he would invite all the people who attended but none would respond positively to him. A man named Maysara Bin Masruq, may Allah be pleased with him, became interested in what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was teaching and urged his tribe to accept and protect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But his tribe rejected his advice and as a result Maysara, may Allah be pleased with him, followed his people and did not accept Islam at that time. On his way back he passed by Fadak and enquired about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from some scholars from the people of the book. These scholars informed him of the characteristics of the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, which matched exactly to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These scholars advised Maysara, may Allah be pleased with him, to accept Islam but added that they would not, as they envied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Maysara, may Allah be pleased with him, managed to convince some of his tribesmen to return the following pilgrimage season to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to accept Islam but their elders prevented them. Years later, Maysara, may Allah be pleased with him, met the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during the farewell Holy Pilgrimage, where he accepted Islam and praised Allah, the Exalted, for saving him from disbelief. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 114-115.

Maysara, may Allah be pleased with him, was delayed in accepting Islam simply because he followed his tribesmen. This indicates the importance of avoiding bad companionship.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

The Helpers (RA) from Medina Accept Islam

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained steadfast on his mission and invited all he encountered towards Islam. He visited many tribes and clans in order to spread the message of Islam. The vast majority, during the early days of Islam, rejected his invitation. For example, he visited the tribe of Kinda, the tribe of Kalb, the tribe of Hanifa and many others. During the festivals he would invite all the people who attended but none would respond positively to him. This went on until he came across the people of Medina, which was known as Yathrib before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated there. They accepted his message of Islam and aided him in his mission. They learned the divine revelation that had been revealed up to that point and returned back to Medina inviting their people towards Islam. Eventually no home in Medina was empty of a Muslim. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 131.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed

in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

In addition, one of the things which encouraged the people from Medina to accept Islam was the knowledge they had gained from the people of the book who were living in Medina. Knowledge regarding Prophethood and divine scriptures and the prophesy of the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, being sent to their land during their time. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 83-84.

Steadfast in Faith

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained steadfast on his mission and invited all he encountered towards Islam. He visited many tribes and clans in order to spread the message of Islam. The vast majority, during the early days of Islam, rejected his invitation. For example, he visited the tribe of Kinda, the tribe of Kalb, the tribe of Hanifa and many others. During the festivals he would invite all the people who attended but none would respond positively to him. This went on until he came across the people of Medina, which was known as Yathrib before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated there. They accepted his message of Islam and aided him in his mission. They learned the divine revelation that had been revealed up to that point and returned back to Medina inviting their people towards Islam. Eventually no home in Medina was empty of a Muslim. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 131.

One of the first people from Medina to accept Islam was Abu Umama, may Allah be pleased with him. He indicated his steadfast nature through his words when he said, "O Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, there is a path to every call. While some paths are easy, others are difficult. Today you have called us towards something that is both new and difficult for people to accept. You have called us to give up our religions and to follow you in your faith. This is not an easy task. However, we have accepted your call. You have called us to sever all ties we have with both close and distant relatives (by following you instead of them). This is not an easy task. However, we have accepted your call. You have invited us to Islam whereas we are a strong group living in a place that is powerful and mighty (where our lives and properties are safe). None could ever imagine that our leader shall be someone not from amongst us, whose people have rejected him and whose family have deserted him.

This is not an easy task but we have accepted it. These things appear difficult for all except those whose welfare Allah, the Exalted, has decided and who foresee good in its results. We have accepted your call with our tongues, our hearts and our hands because we have believed in what you have said to us and we accept it with conviction that has settled deep within our hearts. We pledge our commitment to you in all of this and we pledge it to our Lord and your Lord as well. The hand of Allah, the Exalted, is above ours (approving this pledge). We shall spill our blood to protect yours and give our lives for yours. We shall protect you as we protect ourselves, our children and our wives. Should we fulfill this pledge, it shall be for Allah, the Exalted. Should we betray this pledge, it shall be betraying Allah, the Exalted, to the cost of making us the most wretched people. O Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, all that we have told you is the absolute truth and we seek the assistance and help of Allah, the Exalted.” This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi’s, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 1, Page 125-126.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one’s faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has

to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

The First Pledge of the Helpers (RA)

During the pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took the following pledge with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 120.

The first part of the pledge was that they would not associate anything with Allah, the Exalted.

The root of this is 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.

The next part of the pledge was that they would not steal.

Generally speaking, it is a major sin to utilise the unlawful. This includes using unlawful wealth, using items which are unlawful and eating unlawful foods. It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol are not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

The next part of the pledge was that they would not commit fornication.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 68:

“...and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty.”

The true servants of Allah, the Exalted, avoid all forms of illegal relationships. The fact that adultery has been placed next to polytheism and killing an innocent person in this verse indicates its severity.

Muslims should take precautions in order to avoid being tempted into illegal relationships. Firstly, they should learn to lower their gaze. This does not mean one should always stare at their shoes but it means they should avoid looking around unnecessary especially in public places. They should avoid staring at others and maintain respect for the opposite gender. Just like a Muslim would not like someone staring at their sister or daughter they should not stare at other people's sisters and daughters. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 30:

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision¹ and guard their private parts. That is purer for them...”

Whenever possible a Muslim should avoid spending time alone with the opposite gender unless they are related in a way which prohibits marriage. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1862.

Muslims should dress and behave with modesty. Dressing modestly avoids attracting the glances of strangers and behaving modestly prevents one from taking the initial steps which could lead to an illegal relationship such as talking unnecessarily to the opposite gender.

Understanding the blessings of avoiding illegal relationships is another way to protect oneself from them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed Paradise to the one who safeguards their tongue and chastity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2408.

Fearing the punishment of being involved in illegal relationships will also aid a Muslim to avoid them. For example, faith will depart from the person who is committing fornication. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4690.

In reality, a Muslim does not need illegal relationships as Islam prescribes marriage. Those who cannot afford to marry should fast often as this also helps to control one's desires and actions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3398.

The next part of the pledge was that they would not kill their children.

The non-Muslims of Arabia would often kill their newborn girls as they saw them as a curse.

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 78, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings of Paradise to the parents who correctly raise two daughters. It is surprising how many Muslims, especially Asians, always desire sons and have adopted the ignorant mentality of not being as pleased when they have daughters even though, the glad tidings mentioned in this Hadith and many others have not been given regarding sons. It is acceptable to believe that a parent would stress more over a daughter than a son, especially in this day and age, but none the less, it does not mean Muslim parents should be less happy if they have a daughter instead of a son. They should remember that their duty is to educate and guide their children according to the teachings of Islam and not stress over their destiny as this is not in their control.

Disliking having daughters is an ignorant mentality which completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, disliking having daughters is the attitude of polytheists and one should avoid their characteristics at all costs. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verses 58-59:

“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed...”

Muslim should avoid adopting this mentality and instead be content with any child they are given, as they are plenty of married couples who do not have any children.

The next part of the pledge was that they would not make false accusations.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using

hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a Muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone

else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a Muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

The next part of the pledge was that they would not disobey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in anything good.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would command others to do nothing except good, this clause was added for the sake of the future leaders of the Islamic nation, who had the potential to command others to do what was wrong.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Islam Spreads in Medina

Spreading Good

At the request of the people of Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Mus'ab Bin Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, to Medina in order to teach them about Islam. He worked tirelessly until every house in Medina had Muslims in it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 1, Pages 136-137.

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

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

action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

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

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

Advising Gently

At the request of the people of Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Mus'ab Bin Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, to Medina in order to teach them about Islam. He worked tirelessly until every house in Medina had Muslims in it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, *Hayatus Sahabah*, Volume 1, Pages 136-137.

On one occasion, two non-Muslim chiefs of Medina aggressively confronted Mus'ab, may Allah be pleased with him, one after the other, and criticized him for his efforts in inviting people towards Islam. Mus'ab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not respond harshly and instead gently advised them to sit and listen to what he had to say and if they were pleased with it they could accept it otherwise they were free to reject it and leave in peace. After the two chiefs, Usaid Ibn Hudair and Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with them, listened to the Holy Quran and the teachings of Islam, they both accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 154-155.

The beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

“...And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers...”

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

“And said, "I am your most exalted lord.””

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith

found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

Adhering to the Prescribed Way

Some of the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, journeyed towards Mecca during the pilgrimage season to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. During their journey, one of them, Bara Ibn Marur, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted on praying towards the House of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca, the Kaaba, even though the prescribed method at that time was to pray towards Masjid Al Aqsa in Jerusalem. Even though the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, criticized him yet he persisted until he reached Mecca and told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him he should have remained on the prescribed prayer direction towards Masjid Al Aqsa. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 85-86.

This incident indicates the importance of adhering to the prescribed way in all cases.

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.

The Second Pledge of the Helpers (RA)

During another pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, once again visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took another pledge with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 132.

The first aspect of the pledge was that they would hear and obey the teachings of Islam.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of Muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many Muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of Muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some Muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

In addition, true obedience to the teachings of Islam is only possible when one adopts true 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, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfills 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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

The next part of the pledge the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, made with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was that they would give the worldly blessings they possessed to the needy whether in times of difficulty or ease, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that when a Muslim donates a tiny amount of charity such as a single date fruit from lawful earnings Allah, the Exalted, will give reward on Judgment Day equivalent to a large mountain.

The first thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, is only pleased with wealth which is obtained lawfully and utilized in a lawful manner. Any wealth

which is obtained unlawfully will corrupt any righteous deed it is used upon such as charity or performing the Holy Pilgrimage with it. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, clearly warns that a person's supplication will be rejected if they obtain and utilize the unlawful. If one's supplication is rejected how can any other action be accepted by Allah, the Exalted?

This Hadith indicates the importance of spending in anyway which pleases Allah, the Exalted, such as spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. Allah, the Exalted, will greatly reward those who spend in the correct way according to their intention meaning, the quality of their spending and not according to quantity. Therefore, Muslims should correct their intention by spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of how much or little it is. It is important for a Muslim to spend according to their means and never worry about how much or little they spend. It is hoped that whoever spends according to their means will be granted reward according to the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, which is beyond comprehension. But the one who holds back will miss out on this great reward.

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. It is vital for Muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The next part of the pledge the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, made with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was that they would command good and forbid evil.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only

care about themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

The next part of the pledge the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, made with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was that they would object to evil for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not fear any criticism directed at them for doing so.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all Muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is

only a duty on a Muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised Muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates himself and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”

But it is important to note, a Muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to Muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed...do not spy...”

It is important to note, that a Muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A Muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

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

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

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

The next part of the pledge the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, made with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was that they would help and defend the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the same way they would help and defend their own relatives.

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

as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

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

Pledge for Paradise

As discussed in the previous section, during another pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, once again visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took another pledge with him, which involved the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 132.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them that they would have Paradise in exchange for this pledge. Abdullah Bin Rawahah, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that this was a prosperous transaction and they would never revoke or resign it. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 111:

“Indeed, Allāh has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allāh, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur’ān. And who is truer to his covenant than Allāh? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:111, Page 94.

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.

United for Allah (SWT)

As discussed in the previous section, during another pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, once again visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took another pledge with him, which involved the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with him, voiced his concern that he feared that when Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he would return to Mecca and leave the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. This could cause problems for them especially after supporting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, against countless enemies. At this the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, smiled and replied that if they blood was sought by their enemies then that would be the same as if his blood was sought. And their defeat would be his defeat. He promised to battle those who battled against them and make peace with those who they made peace with. He concluded that he was from them and they were from him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 134.

With the passing of time many people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Under Your Care

As discussed in the previous section, during another pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, once again visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took another pledge with him, which involved the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After 12 leaders from the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, were chosen, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised these leaders that the people of Medina would be entrusted to them just as the apostles/disciples represented the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 135.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Facing Challenges

As discussed in the previous section, during another pilgrimage season to Mecca, which used to occur before the coming of Islam even though the correct practices had become corrupted, the people of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, once again visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and took another pledge with him, which involved the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After this meeting, they were commanded to return home. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca found out that some of the people from Medina had accepted Islam and as a result tried to apprehend them before they escaped back to Medina. All of them managed to escape except Sa'd Bin Ubadah, may Allah be pleased with him. He was caught, tied up and dragged to Mecca where he was violently beaten. Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, remained firm on his faith and never wavered. He managed to get released by calling on some noblemen of Mecca who used to do business with him. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 88-89.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in

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

Migration of the Companions (RA) to Medina

After the violence against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, escalated further, he gave the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, permission to migrate to Medina. Covertly, they began to migrate to Medina leaving behind everything they owned and knew.

The only person who did not migrate in secret was Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. When he decided to migrate, he put on his sword, put his bow over his shoulder, picked up his arrows and carried his stick by his side. He went out to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, where the non-Muslims were sitting and circumambulated the Kaaba and prayed behind the Station of Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Then he went to each of the gatherings of the non-Muslims and told them he was migrating and whoever desired to make their mother bereft of himself, his child an orphan and his wife a widow, should meet him behind a valley. No one dared to challenge him to a fight. Instead, a few weak and oppressed people followed him and he taught them about Islam and then left Mecca and headed for Medina, with a handful of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 60.

Several Companions, including Uthman Ibn Affan and his wife, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with them, departed for Ethiopia leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

Sometime later, they heard that the people of Mecca accepted Islam. Some of them returned to Mecca, including Uthman and his wife, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with them, but then they realized the news was false. They remained in Mecca until they were eventually commanded to migrate to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 22-26.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling

His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

Sincerity to People

After migrating to Medina, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed that two non-Muslims from Mecca, Abu Jahl Ibn Hisham and Harith Ibn Hisham, visited Medina in order to convince their Muslim half-brother, Ayyash Ibn Abi Rabee'ah, may Allah be pleased to him, to return to Mecca with them. They promised him they did not desire to harm him and only wanted him to return to Mecca to visit their mother, who had sworn not to look after herself until she saw him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was perceptive and understood the two non-Muslims were plotting a scheme against Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told him not to go with them. Out of love for his mother, Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, desired to go to Mecca and commented that he would also bring some of his wealth back from Mecca to Medina, after seeing his mother. In order to discourage him, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, offered him half his wealth. But Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, still refused to stay in Medina. Finally, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gave him his own fast camel and warned him to immediately flee from the non-Muslims of Mecca if he suspected them of treachery. On the way back to Mecca, Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, was betrayed and kidnapped. They tortured him until he gave up Islam and returned to his former religion.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that Allah, the Exalted, would never accept the repentance of a person who apostatized. Later on, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the following verses were revealed about those who apostatized. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verses 53-55:

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped. And follow the best of what was revealed to you from your Lord [i.e., the Qur'ān] before the punishment comes upon you suddenly while you do not perceive.""

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then wrote these verses down and sent them to those who were tortured and forced to apostatize. They sincerely repented and eventually managed to migrate to Medina to join their Muslim brothers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 61-64.

In every step, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, showed complete sincerity to his Muslim brothers. He first warned Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, not to go with the two non-Muslims back to Mecca and even offered half his wealth to keep him in Medina. He even gave him his own camel to travel on. Finally, he sent these verses of the Holy Quran to them in order to encourage them to sincerely repent and re-enter the fold of Islam. This sincerity to others is a key aspect of Islam.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Migration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Medina

Permission to Migrate

Allah, the Exalted, gave the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, permission to migrate to Medina by revealing chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 80:

“And say, “My Lord, cause me to enter a sound entrance and to exit a sound exit and grant me from Yourself a supporting authority.””

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 151.

The supplication in this verse encompasses both one's inward intention and outward action. Entering with the truth can indicate that whenever a Muslim enters any situation, whether worldly or religious, they should do so with the intention to please Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim will be rewarded for all the lawful actions completed with this intention even if the deed appears worldly. For example, earning lawful wealth and fulfilling the needs of one's family appears to be a worldly deed but when done with the correct intention it becomes a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. It is important to note,

that a sincere intention is always supported by actions according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who possesses an incorrect intention will not be rewarded by Allah, the Exalted. In fact, on Judgment Day they will be told to seek their reward from who they acted for. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Entering on the truth also includes physically entering every situation in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and only performing those actions which are pleasing to Him while avoiding all situations and actions which are based on falsehood and sins. This is only achieved by learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Exiting on the truth is when one leaves every situation with an intention which pleases Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, a Muslim must maintain their good intention from the start till the end of an action without changing it. And it includes practically leaving situations in a way pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, leaving a difficulty or test with patience according to the teachings of Islam knowing that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best situation for each person even if they do not observe the wisdom behind His choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

The final part of this supplication indicates the importance of adhering to the supreme authority of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.

Finally, a supporting authority could also indicate a request for Allah, the Exalted, to bless a Muslim with the strength to use their authority over their own body and blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

An Evil Gathering

When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began to migrate to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca understood that it was only a matter of time when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also migrates to Medina. They feared that if Medina became an Islamic state then that would threaten their influence and power within the region. So they held a meeting in Dar Al Nadwa, which is located in Mecca, close to the house of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Even the Devil disguised as an old man joined their meeting. Members of this meeting offered their opinions on what to do with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to crush his mission but the Devil refuted them until the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Jahl, suggested his opinion. He advised to assassinate him with a group of people belonging to different tribes. This would prevent the tribe of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, waging war against them all in retaliation and they would simply pay his tribe off in order to end the affair. The Devil and all the other members of this meeting agreed with this evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 152-153.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to

do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

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

Supporting Claims

When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca plotted to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they ordered the group assigned with this evil task to wait outside the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and attack him while he slept. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to take his place in his bed and guaranteed his safety, so that he could migrate in secret. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 152-153.

Like all the Companions, Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, supported his verbal claim of loving and believing in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with actions.

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.

A Way Out

When the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca plotted to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they ordered the group assigned with this evil task to wait outside the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and attack him while he slept. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to take his place in his bed and guaranteed his safety, so that he could migrate in secret. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left his home, he recited the Holy Quran and Allah, the Exalted, temporarily took away the sight of the assassins. While walking through them the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, poured dirt on their heads and left. The assassins only realized what had occurred after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had left the area and when they were informed of what had occurred to them by a passer-by. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 153.

This miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

Repaying Trusts

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina with Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. He left behind Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, ordering him to migrate to Medina after he returned the people of Mecca their precious belongings which they deposited with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for safekeeping, as his reputation for honesty and trustworthiness was widely known and accepted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 155.

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

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

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

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

Striving for Independence

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, had purchased and prepared two camels for their migration. When he offered the best of the two camels to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a gift, the latter refused to accept it and instead agreed to purchase the camel from Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 98.

This indicates the importance of being independent.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever holds back from asking others will be granted independence. And whoever sincerely tries to be patient will be granted patience by Allah, the Exalted. And whoever is content with what they possess will be made self-sufficient. He concluded that there is no gift greater than patience.

There is no harm in asking for help from others when one is in need but a Muslim should not get into this habit as it can lead to a loss of self-respect. This can be dangerous as the one who loses self-respect is more likely to commit sins as they stop caring what Allah, the Exalted, and others think about them.

In addition, a Muslim should strive to utilize all the means they have been granted before turning to others for help. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted independence of people by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must force patience on themselves especially, during times of difficulty. The best way to achieve this is by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, will give an uncountable reward to the patient Muslim is more likely to be patient than the one who is ignorant of this fact. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The truly rich person is the one who is not needy and greedy for things. This occurs when one becomes satisfied with what they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which is achieved when one rightfully believes that Allah, the Exalted, gives what is best to each person according to His infinite knowledge. 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."

This person is truly rich whereas the one who is always greedy and needy for things is poor even if they possess much wealth. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420.

Finally, patience is important to adopt as it is required in each element of obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and when facing destiny. Put simply, success in worldly or religious matters is not possible without patience.

Adhering to the Truth

During their migration to Medina, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was asked by a passerby who the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was, as he did not recognize him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, did not want to tell him the truth, as this information might have reached the non-Muslims of Mecca, who were in pursuit of them, but at the same time he did not desire to lie, as he was the pinnacle of honesty and truthfulness. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, told the man that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was simply his guide. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, meant his guide in this world whereas, the man assumed he meant that he was his guide during his journey. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq*, Pages 104-105.

It is a great shame that Muslims nowadays lie for no real reason, even though Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, remained honest, even when facing a deadly situation.

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.

True Love

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina with Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. During their journey Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, would first position himself in front of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when walking and then sometimes position himself behind him. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned him about his behaviour, he responded that every time he feared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would be attacked from behind, he would position himself behind the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but then he would fear a frontal attack and this would cause him to switch positions. They eventually took shelter in the Cave of Mount Thawr for a few days. Before entering the cave, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted on entering it first in order to clean and remove any harmful things from inside it. He even placed his foot on a crevice inside the cave out of fear a creature might emerge from it and harm the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 157.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him

as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to

follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

The Best Companion

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, sought refuge in the cave of Mount Thawr during the migration to Medina, they were pursued by the non-Muslims of Mecca determined to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The non-Muslims of Mecca eventually reached the cave where they were hiding. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, observed that if the non-Muslims were to look down at their feet they would see both him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, hiding in the cave. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear that he was not worried about his own safety, rather he was fearful something would happen to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. At this the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that he should not grieve as Allah, the Exalted, was their third Companion. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3922 and in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 159-160. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 40:

"...when they were in the cave and he [i.e., the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] said to his companion, "Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us."..."

In a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

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

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

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

Trusting Correctly

The migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, proves that trusting in Allah, the Exalted, consists of using the means one has been provided by Allah, the Exalted, in the correct way and then to firmly believe that whatever Allah, the Exalted, decides, is best for everyone involved.

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

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

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

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim

understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

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

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

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

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

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

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such

as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Best of Places

Before entering Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, resided for ten days in Quba where he built the first Mosque of Islam, which is regarded to be the Mosque which is indicated in chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 108:

“...A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allāh loves those who purify themselves.”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3906.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational

prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

The Blessed Life in Medina

The 1st Year After Migration

Construction of Masjid Nabawi in Medina

A Beautiful Legacy

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina, one of the first things he did was build a house of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid An Nabawi. The land belonged to two orphaned boys, Suhayl and Sahl, may Allah be pleased with them, who offered the land for free but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused to take it for free and purchased it from them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 165-166.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them

to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

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

Lead by Example

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina, one of the first things he did was build a house of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid An Nabawi. Instead of ordering others to build the Mosque and relax himself, which most leaders in this day and age would do, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively took part in constructing the Mosque. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 166.

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

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

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

Achieving Goodness

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina one of the first things he did was build a house of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid An Nabawi. Instead of ordering others to build the Mosque and relax himself, which most leaders in this day and age would do, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively took part in constructing the Mosque. While building the Mosque the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would chant, "O Allah, there is no good except the good of the afterlife; please aid the Helpers and the Emigrants!" This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, Number 453.

This means that one will only achieve good in both worlds when they connect their worldly blessings to the hereafter.

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.

One can adopt the 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.

Effects of Jealousy

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, entered Medina, he rode by the house of one of the chiefs of Medina, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who later became the chief of the hypocrites. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, expected an invitation from him but Abdullah Bin Ubayy rudely told him to stay with the people who invited him to Medina. Sa'd Bin Ubada, may Allah be pleased with him, apologised for Abdullah's behaviour and commented that before his arrival to Medina, they were preparing to make Abdullallah their king. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 180.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse

kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Doing Business Correctly

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, many of the merchants traded unfairly and so Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 1-6:

“Woe to those who give less [than due]. Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss. Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day. The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

After this, the merchants began to trade fairly and honestly. This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 83:1, Page 162.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings

of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Great Sacrifices

After the violence against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased them, escalated further he gave the Companions, may Allah be pleased them, permission to migrate to Medina. Covertly they began to migrate to Medina leaving behind everything they owned and knew.

After Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, fulfilled the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to return the belongings of the people of Mecca to them, which was entrusted to him, Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, migrated to Medina to join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He left alone with no riding animal and the journey was therefore extremely dangerous and difficult. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 83.

When one of the Companions, Shoaib, may Allah be pleased him, decided to migrate, the non-Muslims of Mecca attempted to prevent him from doing so. They claimed that when he first entered Mecca he was poor and through the financial opportunities there he became wealthy, so they would therefore not allow him to leave Mecca after benefiting from it. Shoaib, may Allah be pleased him, offered them his entire wealth which he had buried in Mecca in exchange for letting him go or they could fight with him until one side was victorious. They chose to let him go in exchange for his wealth. On his arrival to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised him that his trade was most profitable. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 207:

“And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah. And Allah is Kind to [His] servants.”

This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Page 580.

Dhamra, may Allah be pleased with him, was a wealthy blind man of Mecca who accepted Islam. Even though he was exempt from the obligatory duty of migrating to Medina, because of his disability, he desired to gain the reward and join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He died during his migration and the following verse was revealed about him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 100:

“And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allāh will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allāh and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allāh. And Allāh is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 1, Pages 365-367.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, this incident mentions the migration from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

A Sign of Love

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that if he was not compelled to perform the migration from Mecca to Medina, thereby making him a migrant, a Muhajir, he would have liked to be a Helper from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them all. And if people had been told to journey to any valley he would have gone to the valley of the Companions of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them.

He also once stated that the Helpers from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, were part of his household and family.

On another occasion, he warned that none loves the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, except a believer and none hates them except a hypocrite. Whoever loves them is loved by Allah, the Exalted, and whoever hates them is hated by Allah, the Exalted.

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 186.

There are countless verses and Hadiths which discuss the high status of all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the importance of honouring, loving and following them under all occasions.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

The Truth

After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina, Abdullah Bin Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, a well-respected and knowledgeable Jewish scholar, immediately accepted Islam after seeing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he recognized his signs mentioned in the previous divine revelations. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”

He warned the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that the other Jewish scholars highly respected him but if they found out that he accepted Islam they would make up lies about him. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned the Jewish scholars and asked them to admit the fact that they recognized him as the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they denied him. They initially praised Abdullah Bin Salaam, may Allah be pleased with him, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned him but after finding out he accepted Islam, they called him a liar. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 194-195.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

Heavenly Characteristics

On entering Medina, one of the first things the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the people included: spreading peace, offering food to people and praying at night when others are sleeping and promised Paradise to them in return. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, Number 1334.

The first thing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised was spreading peace.

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

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

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

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

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

The next thing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised was to offer food to people.

Allah, the Exalted, gives people according to what they do. For example, the Holy Quran mentions that if one remembers Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will remember them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

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

Feeding others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is just the same. The one who performs this righteous deed will be fed food from Paradise and whoever gives drink to others will be given drink from Paradise on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449.

When asked about the best type of Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6236, that feeding others and greeting others with kind speech are the best traits in Islam.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

The final thing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised was to offer the night prayer when others are asleep.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to

having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Complete Submission

Some of the Companions, who were formerly from the people of the book, such as Abdullah Bin Salam, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to act on the teachings of Islam and on those teachings from their previous religion which did not contradict the teachings of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, warned them in the following verses not to behave in this manner as there is no right guidance except Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 208-209:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. But if you slip [deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”

This has been discussed in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 531.

The aim of the Devil is to prevent Muslims from acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he knows salvation for them lies in this. Muslims should therefore adhere to these two sources of guidance above all else.

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.

Love for the World

Many different Hadiths and incidents have been recorded which discuss the rejection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam by many of the Jewish and Christian scholars of his time, even though they fully believed he was the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, whom they recognized through their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”

For example, two Jewish scholars once returned from meeting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of them swore by Allah, the Exalted, that he was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as they recognized him through the signs recorded in their divine scriptures. But then he swore by Allah, the Exalted, that he would treat the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with enmity as long as he lived. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 197.

Two major reasons why they behaved in this manner was due to their extreme love for wealth and social status. They understood that accepting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would

mean that they would lose their social influence and the wealth gained from it. They would go from being the leaders of their tribes and religion to being ordinary followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This

person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their

death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the

destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Fine Allies

After some of the Jewish scholars, such as Abdullah Bin Salam, may Allah be pleased with them, accepted Islam, many of their tribesman deserted them and swore not to keep company with them, which was difficult for them as they were their family and friends. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 55-56:

“Your ally is none but Allāh and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakāh, and they bow [in worship]. And whoever is an ally of Allāh and His Messenger and those who have believed - indeed, the party of Allāh - they will be the predominant.”

When hearing these verses, Abdullah Bin Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that they accepted Allah, the Exalted, His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the believers as guardians. This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 5:55, Page 69.

One must join the party of Allah, the Exalted, by adopting 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, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

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.

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters

which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The First Friday Sermon in Medina

The following is the sermon of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, given on the first Friday he prayed in Medina:

“Praise be to Allah, the Exalted; I give Him praise, and I ask His help. I ask for His forgiveness and for His guidance. I believe in Him, will not disbelieve in Him, and will do battle with those who do. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, that He has no associate, that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger whom He has sent with guidance and the religion of truth and light, at a time without Messengers, when there is little knowledge, the people are misguided, when the time is out of joint, and the day of retribution and fate is at hand. Whoever obeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Messenger is rightly guided; whoever disobeys Allah, the Exalted, and His Messenger is misled, and has erred and gone far astray. I charge you to fear Allah, the Exalted; this is the best advice a Muslim can give a Muslim, to urge him onto the afterlife, to order him to fear Allah, the Exalted. Beware of what Allah, the Exalted, has Himself cautioned you. There is no better advice nor charge than this. It is an act of piety for those who accomplish this with apprehension and fear and a true means of assistance towards your aspirations for the afterlife. Whoever cultivates, both openly and in secret, his relationship with Allah, the Exalted, seeking only His favor thereby, shall receive recognition in the short term and reward after death, when a man will wish he had done differently than he had done before, and would want to put great distance between himself and that behaviour. Allah, the Exalted, bids you beware of Him, though He is merciful towards His worshippers. Whoever believes His words and fulfills His promise will find nothing taken back therefrom for Allah, the Exalted states “*Whatever I say shall not be changed, and I am not unjust towards my worshippers.*” (Chapter 50 Qaf, verse 29). Fear Allah, the Exalted, both in matters that are at hand and those that follow, in secret and openly, for “... *Whoever fears Allah, Allah will remove his evil*

ways from him and give him a great reward.” (Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 5). And “...*Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will have won a mighty success.*” (Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 71). Fearing Allah, the Exalted, will forestall His disapproval, His punishment and His anger. Fearing Allah, the Exalted, will bring satisfaction, please the Lord and elevate one’s status. Take advantage of your good fortune and do not be lax in matters pertaining to Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, has instructed you in His book, laid out for you His path, so that He may make evident those who speak the truth and those who lie. Do good, just as Allah, the Exalted, does good to you. Oppose His enemies and strive energetically for Allah, the Exalted. It is He who chose you and named you Muslims, so that those who perish do so with evident cause, while those who live do so with evident cause. There is no power but with Allah, the Exalted. Make frequent mention of Allah, the Exalted. Strive for what comes after death. For he who makes good his relationship with Allah, the Exalted, will find his relationship with people satisfactory. That is because Allah, the Exalted, passes judgement upon people, while they do not pass judgment upon Him. It is He who controls people, while they do not control Him. Allah, the Exalted, is truly Great! There is no power but with Allah, the Exalted and Glorious.” This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 197-199.

Best Places on Earth

The Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Medina was initially built with bricks above which was a light roof made of palm leaves. Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, made no improvements to it during his Caliphate. But during his Caliphate Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, enlarged it, rebuilding it in the same manner as in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that is with bricks and palm leaves and he also restored its wooden pillars. During his Caliphate Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, made changes and major additions. He had its walls built with cut stone and plaster, its pillars of stone and its roof of teak. He was putting into effect the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 738. It advises that whoever builds a Mosque for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even as small as a sparrow's nest or smaller, Allah, the Exalted, will build for them a house in Paradise. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 201-202.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational

prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

Apartments of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Simple Housing

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, built apartments around his Mosque which would be dwellings for himself and his family. These were small dwellings with narrow courtyards. They were short in size, as an adult could touch the highest ceiling in these apartments while standing. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 207.

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

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

deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

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

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

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

The Call to Prayer

Call to Success

After the construction of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the people needed to be alerted to when the congregational prayers at the Mosque were about to begin. Some suggestions were made, such as using a horn or a bell, but these were rejected by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he did not desire to imitate the people of the book. Someone suggested that a person should call out when the congregational prayer was about to commence. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, favored this option. Abdullah Bin Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, saw a dream where a person dictated to him what the call of prayer should consist of. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, also experienced a similar dream. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Bilal Bin Rabah, may Allah be pleased with him, to make the call for the congregational prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 731-733.

The first thing to note is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose an Ethiopian former slave to give the call to prayer, someone who was often looked down upon by the wider society of Arabia because of his ethnicity and social status. This indicates the importance of equality in Islam.

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, this incident also indicates the importance of attending the Mosques for the sake of education and offering the obligatory prayers with the congregation.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with

them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Kind Treatment

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, drew up a contract between the different Muslim and non-Muslim groups of Medina. It included that the non-Muslims of Medina, such as the Jews, must never be mistreated nor should a Muslim help someone acting against them unjustly. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 213.

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

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

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

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

Brotherhood Between Helpers & Migrants (RA)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, established brotherhood between his fellow Emigrants, the Muhajireen and the Helpers, the Ansars, may Allah be pleased with them all. He advised them to become brothers in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 215.

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Two Parts of Gratitude

The Emigrants of Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, once complimented the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They said that they had never been to a people who gave more help to them and yet desired nothing in return than the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. They added that the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, spared them of much difficulty and shared their comfort with them. They concluded that they were afraid that the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, would receive all the reward of Allah, the Exalted, and they, the Emigrants of Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, would receive nothing, as they were not in a position to reciprocate. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that the Emigrants of Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, would receive reward as they correctly praised and supplicated for the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 217.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted,

being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Unparalleled Generosity

The Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, once requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to divide their orchards of palm trees equally between them and the Companions of Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them. He did not desire to cause stress to them so instead advised them to retain ownership and instead allow the Companions of Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, to work with them on their lands and then divide the produce of the land between them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3782.

This verse is connected to chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a Muslim likes and loves. For example, Muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two

in one's day. Countless Muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that Muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

Earning Provision

Even though the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, shared their wealth and homes with the Companions from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, the latter did not become lazy and dependent on others. Rather, they worked hard to earn lawful provision in order to provide for themselves and others. For example, Sa'd Ibn Ar Rabee, offered half his wealth to Abdur Rahman Bin Auf, may Allah be pleased with them, but the latter kindly declined and instead headed for the marketplace to earn his lawful provision. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 2048.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using

the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a Muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

True Knowledge

In Medina, most of the Jewish scholars arrogantly rejected Islam and were full of antagonism towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They were those who asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many pointless questions in order to confuse others and express their obstinacy and disbelief. They made things difficult for Islam and tried tirelessly to extinguish it, even though they recognized the truthfulness of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 227.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

The Hypocrites in Medina

Two-Faced

It is well known that apart from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and those who openly disbelieved, a third group emerged in Medina who were known as the hypocrites. They pretended to accept Islam outwardly in order to reap the rewards of being a Muslim but were disbelievers as they rejected Islam internally and secretly. They possessed many evil traits which have been discussed extensively in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, one of them would attentively listen to the Holy Quran being recited by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while secretly planning against Islam with his fellow hypocrites. This man once stated that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was just an ear who believed anything which was said to him. At this Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 61:

“And among them are those who abuse the Prophet and say, “He is an ear.” Say, “[It is] an ear of goodness for you that believes in Allah and believes the believers and [is] a mercy to those who believe among you.” And those who abuse the Messenger of Allah - for them is a painful punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:61-62, Pages 88-89.

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

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

Causing Disunity

When the non-Muslims of Mecca became aware that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had established an Islamic state in Medina and even signed treaties with the local non-Muslims, they sent a threatening letter to the chief of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, warning him to fight and expel the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, otherwise they would launch a military campaign against him and destroy Medina. Abdullah gathered some of his cronies in order to challenge the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, talked them down and reminded them that the non-Muslims of Mecca were only trying to cause problems between them. Abdullah Bin Ubayy, and his followers did back down, but he continued harboring ill feelings towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 199.

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

of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

Divine Guardianship

Initially, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was guarded by his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, especially at night, as they feared a surprise attack from their enemies. Thereafter Allah, the Exalted, revealed the following words in chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 67:

"...And Allāh will protect you from the people..."

After this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, not to guard him thereafter as Allah, the Exalted, was guarding him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3046.

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even

contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Importance of Good Business

The main trading markets were controlled by the Jews, who took part in unlawful and unjust practices, such as usury. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then established a marketplace near his Mosque. He outlined the importance of just and fair business dealings so that the people would trade fairly with one another. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 923-925.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Permission to Fight

As the enemies of Islam, the non-Muslims of Mecca, were persisting in aggression towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, granted the Muslims permission to fight in self-defence and for the sake of establishing peace and justice. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 39:

“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allāh is competent to give them victory.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 200-201.

It is vital to understand that in order to correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must place them in their correct context. Meaning, no verse or Hadith can be taken in isolation without observing the context in which it was revealed in order to justify someone’s actions. In order to correctly understand the context one must assess the verses and Hadiths which are linked to it in the light of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only in this way will it become clear what or who a specific verse or Hadith refers to.

In addition, Muslims can only take up arms against external aggressors under the banner of a legitimate ruler and when it is done according to the injunctions found within the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who fight must constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, in crossing these limits and rules. One such rule is to resort to war only when one is attacked, as indicated by the main verse under discussion. Therefore, showing physical aggression against an enemy in a state of peace is forbidden. Another rule is that when the enemy desists from aggression then Muslims must desist also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

“...But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [i.e., assault] except against the violators.”

If the enemy desires peace it must be granted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 90:

“...So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them.”

The third rule is that civilians are not to be harmed. This has been indicated by the main verse under discussion as this is transgressing. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly forbade women, children, elders, and the sick, as well as

monks and hermits to be harmed during war. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2614, and Musnad Ahmad, number 2728.

The first Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, forbade the killing of children, women and the elderly. He forbade the cutting of fruit bearing trees, damaging property and the killing of cattle. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33121.

The second Caliph of Islam Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear to the Muslim armies not to harm non-soldiers such as a farmer. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33120.

In case of impending conflict the Muslim nation are commanded to prepare as best as they can. This preparation aims to deter the enemy from attacking, in which case if the enemy wish for peace it must be granted to them. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verses 60-61:

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allāh and your enemy...And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]...”

Permission is granted to fight those who do not honor their treaties with the Muslims. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?”

Islam has forbade attacking those who respect their treaties. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“...So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

There is no question of forcing anyone to accept Islam as it is something which must be accepted by one's heart not only through one's tongue and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion...”

Those who are at peace with the Muslims are to be treated with justice at all times. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verses 8-9:

“Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allāh only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion...”

War is hateful to Allah, the Exalted, and Muslims must be forced into it and not desire it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even warned Muslims not to desire fighting and instead commanded them to desire safety from Allah, the Exalted. But if they were forced to encounter the enemy then they must remain steadfast. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966.

The real intent of these verses is to stress that force should be used only when its use is unavoidable, only to the extent that is absolutely necessary and under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As mentioned earlier it is vital to assess a verse or a Hadith in its right context in order to understand who, what and where it applies. Unfortunately, many people, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to interpret the verses and Hadiths on fighting in this way. One very famous example is of a verse which is referred to as the sword verse even though the word “sword” is not mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush...”

As explained earlier in detail even this statement of war is restricted to specific conditions and concessions of peace. In addition, studying the historical context of this and other related verses clearly prove that it is not a universal principle for fighting non-Muslims. Meaning, the verse refers to a specific group of people, at a specific time and in a specific place.

The surrounding verses of the Sword verse clearly indicate, multiple times, that the polytheists referred to are only those who repeatedly violated their peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and engaged in acts of violent aggression against the Muslim community and its allies. For example, the verse immediately before the Sword verse, meaning, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 4, states:

“Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

This is followed by another command in a related verse, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

The crimes of these polytheists whom fighting was commanded against are mentioned in other related verses. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 8-10:

“How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compliance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price and averted [people] from His way. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing. They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?...”

These specific polytheists continuously broke their agreements and aided others against Islam. They began hostilities against the Muslims, prevented people from accepting Islam, expelled Muslims from Mecca and Masjid Al Haram. At least eight times in the quoted verses their crimes against the Muslims are mentioned.

In chapter 9 Tawbah, verse 12, which is quoted above, the goal of fighting the “leaders of disbelief” is so they “cease” from their acts of aggression. These verses, like the rest, indicate the importance of adhering to specific conditions during times of war such as fighting only those who fight them first.

In addition, these polytheists were still offered many warnings and concessions. They were given a four-month period of respite and peace. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 2:

“So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah...”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable [four] months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush...”

This respite was given so that they either accept Islam or peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to grant protection to any of these polytheists who request it so that they have the opportunity to listen to the teachings of Islam without any fear or pressure or they could peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula without the fear of being harmed. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 6:

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”

The command in the sword verse of fighting and killing these polytheists would only come into effect if they remained in the Arabian Peninsula after the four-month respite without accepting Islam. It is important to note that many of the polytheists took advantage of this respite and accepted Islam. Because of this respite fighting came to an end and no blood was actually shed on account of the Sword verse as the aim of this verse was to act as a deterrent from further bloodshed meaning, either these polytheists accept Islam or leave the Arabian Peninsula peacefully.

To conclude, the surrounding verses and the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, place the Sword verse in its correct context. Meaning, these verses were specifically revealed in order to put an end to attacks from specific hostile polytheists against the Muslim community. Therefore, they cannot be blankly applied to others after them.

The 2nd Year After Migration

Change in Prayer Direction

Always Facing Allah, the Exalted

In the second year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, the direction of the prayer, the Qibla, was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired this change and showed his desire by turning his blessed face towards the Heavens. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

“We have certainly seen the turning of your face toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a Qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face [i.e., yourself] toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [i.e., yourselves] toward it [in prayer]...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 248.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the five obligatory prayers erase one's sins just like taking a bath five times a day would clean the body of dirt.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance.

In addition, it is important for Muslims to not only purify their outer beings of minor sins by establishing the five obligatory prayers but also fulfill the other aspect of purification namely, inner purification. This is indicated by the fact that the five obligatory prayers were spread across the day instead of being put together. Meaning, a Muslim should repeatedly inwardly turn to Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day just like their body turns to Allah, the Exalted, five times a day through the obligatory prayers. This inner purification involves correcting one's intention so that they are only perform actions in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is the foundation of Islam and is what Allah, the Exalted, assesses when judging an action. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of other people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgment Day which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Finally, this inner purification includes learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that one removes the bad characteristics they possess, such as envy and instead adopt good characteristics, such as patience. The outer purification is important but if a Muslim desires to achieve success

and overcome all difficulties in both worlds they must purify their inner being as well as their outer being.

The Prayer Direction

In the second year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, the direction of the prayer, the Qibla, was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca. Allah, the Exalted, declared the purpose of having two prayer directions, one after the other, in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“...And We did not make the Qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 249.

The purpose of having two prayer directions, one after the other, was to make apparent who was truly sincere to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by following him in the change.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on

his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Good Effort

In the second year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, the direction of the prayer, the Qibla, was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whether the prayers of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who died before the change in the prayer direction would be accepted. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.”

This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2964.

This incident is connected to chapter 11 Hud, verse 115:

“...Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”

This verse provides hope that as long as one strives to do something lawful and beneficial their efforts will not be wasted. If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people who do not even believe in Him why would He not support the Muslims who believe in His Oneness and Lordship? If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people when they strive for the material world how can He then waste the efforts of those who strive to achieve good in the hereafter?

People should therefore, never give up striving to achieve good in both this world and in the next. Unfortunately, some Muslims have given up struggling to earn a lawful income after facing some hardship. They instead opt to receive social benefits and become a burden on society. Those who are rightly entitled to receive benefits should continue to utilise them as it is their right. But those who have the ability to earn for themselves should do so.

This verse also encourages Muslims to continue doing good to others even if they do not appreciate their efforts. If one acts with sincerity meaning, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should be confident their efforts have been recorded and will be rewarded in both worlds.

To conclude, whatever lawful action a Muslim performs whether its worldly, such as a business opportunity, or whether they perform a religious deed they should put full effort into it knowing that Allah, the Exalted, will support them and grant them success, sooner or later.

Establishing the Prayers is Faith

In the second year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, the direction of the prayer, the Qibla, was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whether the prayers of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who died before the change in the prayer direction would be accepted. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.”

This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2964.

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, used the word faith in place of the prayers in this verse. This indicates that one cannot possess true faith without establishing the obligatory prayers.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], “What put you into Saqar?” They will say, “We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the

one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

The People of the Bench

After the changing of the prayer direction, the Qibla, the southern part of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then became the back of the Mosque. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instructed for a roof to be built over that part so the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had no place to stay and were poor could stay there, as the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, could not house everyone. There numbers would vary throughout the years and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would host them personally. Any charity that came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for him to distribute, he and his family would take no share of it and he would instead distribute it to the poor of Medina, and particularly to these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. If anyone sent the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a gift, he would utilize some of it for himself and his family and give the rest to the poor, and particularly to these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. These people became known as the People of Suffa, meaning, the People of the Bench. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 734-736.

One should bear in mind that many of these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had wealth and property but chose to leave everything behind in order to migrate and stay with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to learn directly from him.

This is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

Leading Others Astray

In the second year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, the direction of the prayer, the Qibla, was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca. The Jews found this change in the prayer direction difficult as the previous prayer direction coincided with their prayer direction and they therefore used it as evidence that they were rightly guided. One of the Jewish leaders, Ka'b Bin Ashraf, advised some of his followers to initially believe in Islam and pray towards Mecca with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and then disbelieve in Islam and the prayer direction of the Muslims by the end of the day. He aimed to confuse the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and hoped they would follow them as they were learned and educated people of Medina. Meaning, if the educated people rejected Islam after learning about it, it must therefore be wrong. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 72:

“And a faction of the People of the Scripture say [to each other], “Believe in that which was revealed to the believers at the beginning of the day and reject it at its end that perhaps they will return [i.e., abandon their religion].”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 3:72, Page 35.

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

Obligation of Fasting

A Unique Deed

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, fasting in Ramadan became obligatory for all adult Muslims unless they were/are exempt by Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 250.

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

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

In addition, fasting is a righteous deed which puts a lock on every aspect of oneself. Meaning, a person who fasts correctly will be prevented from

committing verbal and physical sins, such as looking at and hearing unlawful things. This is also achieved through the prayer but the prayer is only performed for a short time and is visible to others whereas, fasting occurs throughout the day and is invisible to others. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

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

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

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

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

In addition, as indicated by the verse quoted earlier fasting correctly leads to piety. Meaning, simply starving during the day does not lead to piety but paying extra attention to abstaining from sins and performing righteous

deeds during the fast will lead to piety. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, warns that a fast will not be significant if one does not abstain from speaking and acting on falsehood. A similar Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1690, warns that some fasting people obtain nothing except hunger. When one becomes more aware and careful in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are fasting this habit will eventually affect them so they behave in a similar way even when they are not fasting. This is in fact true piety.

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

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

A Muslim should also fast inwardly as their body fasts outwardly by abstaining from sinful or vain thoughts. They should fast from persisting on their own plans in respect to their desires and try to concentrate on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they should fast from inwardly challenging the decree of Allah, the Exalted, and instead except destiny and whatever it brings knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind these choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Obligatory Charity

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the obligatory charity was commanded. Muslims would give charity prior to this but the exact quantity and finer details were not revealed and commanded until this year. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 933-934.

Severe warnings over failing to donate the obligatory charity have been given in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, when the members of a society withhold the obligatory charity Allah, the Exalted, will withhold rain and if it was not for the animals He would not let it rain

at all. This major sin is therefore one potential cause of the long periods of drought some nations face.

Not offering the obligatory charity is a sign of extreme greed as it is only an extremely tiny portion of one's wealth namely, 2.5%. It is clear that the miser is far from Allah, the Exalted, the people and close to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Muslims must understand that donating the obligatory charity does not only protect them from punishment but it leads to blessings in one's life which far outweigh the wealth they donated. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that charity does not decrease one's wealth. This means that when one donates Allah, the Exalted, compensates them. For example, He provides them with business opportunities which cause them to gain more wealth than they donated. This repayment is confirmed in many places of the Holy Quran for example, chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 11:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him and he will have a noble reward?”

In addition, this Hadith could indicate that as each person's provision is pre-recorded whatever wealth which is destined to be spent on them will never change irrespective of how much wealth a person donates. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

A Muslim must therefore avoid the wrath of Allah, the Exalted, by donating a very small fraction of their wealth in the form of the obligatory charity while hoping for a reward which is much greater both in this world and the next.

A Bad Intention

A man named Thalabah, who claimed to be a Muslim, once asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to supplicate for Allah, the Exalted, to bless him with wealth so that, like the other Muslims, he too can give charity in abundance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Thalabah that it was better for him to have less and be grateful than have too much and be unable to show his gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also stated that would it not be better that he lived like him and have little and be satisfied. After Thalabah persistently insisted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for him. Shortly after Thalabah's business began to grow so much that he had to move outside the city of Medina. During this period Thalabah was only seen at the Mosque at the Friday prayer. During this period giving a certain amount of charity became obligatory for those who could afford it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to the different Islamic areas to collect this charity including to where Thalabah resided. When the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, requested the obligatory charity from Thalabah, it was at this moment that Thalabah revealed his hypocrisy. Greed consumed him and he uttered some disrespectful words by saying that Allah, the Exalted, had now put tax on him. After saying this Thalabah told the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, to move on and collect the obligatory charity from the others and he would use this time to ponder whether to give it or not. When this Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, eventually returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he stated that Thalabah had been destroyed. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 75-77:

“And among them [hypocrites] are those who made a covenant with Allah, [saying], "If He should give us from His bounty, we will surely spend in charity, and we will surely be among the righteous." But when He gave them from His bounty, they were stingy with it and turned away while they refused. So He penalized them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the Day they will meet Him - because they failed Allah in what they promised Him and because they [habitually] used to lie.”

When Thalabah was informed of this he immediately visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to offer his obligatory charity. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informed Thalabah that Allah, the Exalted, had now forbidden him to take his charity. Here the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reminded Thalabah of his initial intentions. Thalabah tried over many years but each time the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stated that it was too late and he could never go against the command of Allah, the Exalted. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed from this world, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, became the Caliph of the Islamic nation. Thalabah once again tried to restore his status by donating his obligatory charity. But the leader simply replied that if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not take the charity then how could he. Thalabah attempted this with the following two Caliphs of the Islamic nation but again they too rejected Thalabah's attempts. This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 9:75, Pages 90-91.

As his only desire was to restore his status within the community, his offerings were rejected. This has been indicated under the verses quoted

earlier. If he sincerely repented from his hypocrisy in order to please Allah, the Exalted, he would have been forgiven.

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

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

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

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they

should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Stopping Corruption

As the non-Muslims of Mecca made it clear that as long as Medina was an established Islamic state they would be nothing but war between the two cities, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, attempted to weaken the resolve of the non-Muslims of Mecca by attacking their financial infrastructure. The non-Muslims of Mecca would pass by Medina when travelling for trade. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would target these travelling caravans with the aim of disrupting the finances of the non-Muslims of Mecca and seeking compensation for the property and wealth the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were forced to leave behind in Mecca when they migrated to Medina.

On one occasion the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched a unit of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to Nakhlah in order to spy on the non-Muslims of Mecca and bring back information regarding their activities. He did not command them to engage in fighting. But during this expedition these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, seized an opportunity and attacked one of their caravans and seized their wealth and in the process a non-Muslim was killed and two non-Muslims were taken back to Medina as prisoners. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as he did not order them to fight, only to gather intelligence. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also did not realize that they had attacked the caravan during one of the four sacred months, during which fighting was unanimously prohibited for the Arabs even though the non-Muslims would not even adhere to this rule and often changed the order of the months in the calendar year in order to allow themselves to fight. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 36-37:

“Indeed, the number of months with Allāh is twelve [lunar] months in the register of Allāh [from] the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion [i.e., way], so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allāh is with the righteous [who fear Him]. Indeed, the postponing [of restriction within sacred months] is an increase in disbelief by which those who have disbelieved are led [further] astray. They make it lawful one year and unlawful another year to correspond to the number made unlawful by Allāh and [thus] make lawful what Allāh has made unlawful. Made pleasing to them is the evil of their deeds; and Allāh does not guide the disbelieving people.”

Initially, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not make a decision regarding the prisoners of war or the spoils of war but then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217, thereby granting the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, relief:

“They ask you about the sacred month - about fighting therein. Say, “Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allāh and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allāh. And fitnah [corruption] is greater than killing.” And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever - for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then accepted the prisoners of war and the spoils of war. One of the prisoners of war accepted Islam and the other was ransomed by the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 879-881 & 890.

Doing battle during the four Holy months in the year was forbidden even before the coming of Islam (Dhul Al Qa'dah, Dhul Al Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab). But Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that the widespread corruption caused by the non-Muslims of Mecca mentioned in this verse was worse than fighting during the sacred months. The non-Muslims of Mecca had continuously subjected their Muslim relatives to untold wrong for thirteen years, prior to the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, merely because they believed in Allah, the Exalted. They therefore were not competent to object to fighting during the sacred months. Not only had the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, been driven from their homes they also had the way to Masjid Al Haram closed to them, a bar which had not been imposed by anyone for thousands of years. With this record of corruption it was not for them or anyone else to raise an objection to fighting during the sacred months if the need arose.

The corruption in the quoted verse refers to the wide negative effects of the oppression caused by the enemies of Islam meaning, the non-Muslims of Mecca. The heart of this corruption was their misguided faith and loyalties to their tribes, love for wealth, culture and false gods. This verse further proves that fighting was commanded against a specific group of

non-Muslims in Mecca and therefore these verses cannot be applied to others.

Therefore, the corruption in these verses refers to the persecution of innocent people. It refers to a situation whereby either a person or a group is subjected to harassment and intimidation for having accepted, as true, a set of ideas contrary to those currently held, and for striving to effect reforms in the existing order of society by preaching what is good and forbidding what is wrong. Therefore, the only way to prevent this specific harming of innocent people by this corruption was to fight the enemy until Islam was allowed to be practiced openly without opposition and the negative harms to society caused by the non-Muslims was stopped.

In addition, the widespread oppression caused by oppressive rulers, such as the Romans and Persians, during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was widely known. They would constantly oppress the people of the land they had control over. Fighting these people might have led to the killing of soldiers, soldiers which signed up to fight and die, but in the long run it removed the oppression the innocent citizens were subjected to. And if Islamic rule was established correctly, like it was during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the rightly-guided Caliphs after him, then justice would prevail in the land. Therefore, from this one can understand that long-standing oppression to the people is worse than the killing of soldiers if it leads to justice being established.

The Battle of Badr

Greatness is in Humility

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On the way to raiding a caravan the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took turns riding their camels as they had so few. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, shared one camel with Ali Ibn Abu Talib and Abu Lubaba, may Allah be pleased with them. When it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, turn to walk, his two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, offered to take his place so he could ride on the camel. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that they were not stronger than him meaning, he was not injured or sick that he could use that as an excuse not to walk, and he added that he desired the reward of walking. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 258.

Unlike the leaders of today who refuse to face the same difficulties their followers undertake, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, shared in the difficulties faced by his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This was an indication of his great humility. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

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

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bears this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari’s, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Respecting Parents

Abu Umama, may Allah be pleased with him, desired to leave with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to raid the caravan of the non-Muslims of Mecca, but was commanded to remain behind to take care of his sick mother, who later died. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1011-1012.

Even though leaving with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a highly important task and virtue yet he was commanded to remain behind and nurse his sick mother. This indicates the importance of respecting and honouring parents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nobility Lies in Piety

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina to raid a caravan of the non-Muslims of Mecca, he appointed Ibn Umm Maktum, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of leading the congregational prayers in his absence. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 257.

Ibn Umm Maktum, may Allah be pleased with him, was a blind and poor man and even though there were other people who were considered the leaders of their tribes yet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed him to lead the congregational prayers. This indicates the importance of equality in Islam.

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

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform

deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

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

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

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

Seeking Counsel

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On the way to raiding a caravan of the non-Muslims of Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca had organized an army to confront the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, for their opinions on what to do. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 259-260.

Some Muslims have adopted a strange mentality where they counsel many people about their affairs. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

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

“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

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

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

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

Standing Firm

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On the way to raiding a caravan of the non-Muslims of Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca had organized an army to confront the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, for their opinions on what to do.

At this time, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, rose up and comforted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by pledging his support to him under all circumstances and encouraged the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to do the same. Then Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, rose up and did the same thing: he pledged his support to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and encouraged the others to do the same. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 93-94.

Al Miqdad Bin Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, also stated that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not abandon him by following in the footsteps of the nation of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, when they disrespectfully declared that the Holy Prophet Musa, peace and be upon him, and his Lord could go and fight, as they were not going to aid him. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 24:

"They said, "O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here.""

Instead, Miqdad, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would fight with him under all situations. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 250-260.

As the majority of this Muslim army were from the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired them to give their input. One of their leaders, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, realized this and stated on behalf of all the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would obey him in whatever he commanded them to do. He added that if they were ordered to plunge into the sea to fight, they would do so and none of them would hold back. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 212-213.

This incident reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places,

things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

In addition, an aspect of hypocrisy is when one verbally shows support for others and their good projects such as, building a mosque but when the time comes to take part in the project such as, donating wealth they seem to disappear. Similarly, when people are facing good times they verbally

support them reminding others of their loyalty to them. But the moment the people face difficulties these hypocrites offer no emotional or physical support. Instead they criticize them. This was the attitude of the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 62:

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

End of Evil Plots

The non-Muslim caravan, headed by Abu Sufyan, decided to take an alternate route which took them safely away from the Muslims. Abu Sufyan then sent word to the non-Muslims of Mecca, who had mobilized a large army to confront the Muslims, to return back to Mecca as their caravan was safe. But Abu Jahl, who was one of leaders of the non-Muslim army, insisted they should continue marching towards Badr, confront and destroy the Muslims, once and for all. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 211-212.

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

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

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

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

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

Accepting Good Counsel

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached Badr, he stopped at a certain place. Hubab Bin Mundhir, may Allah be pleased him, enquired whether stopping at that place was a divine command or a choice made by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he replied that it was his choice and not a divine command, Hubab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to setup camp at a different location, as it was tactically more advantageous. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted and acted on his advice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 267.

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

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a Muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

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

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

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

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

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

Sincerity to Leaders

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. When the Muslim army reached the battlefield, a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a temporary shelter should be built for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If the Muslim army lost the battle, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could then retreat and rejoin the rest of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in Medina. He added that these Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, only stayed behind in Medina as they were unaware a battle was going to take place and they would always strive to protect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and give him good counsel. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed with his idea but still participated in the battle more than anyone else did. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 268.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Goodness in Destiny

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. As the non-Muslim army reached Badr first, they setup camp at what appeared to be the superior location while the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were left with what appeared to be the inferior location. But after it rained, this situation reversed and the camp of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, became the superior location. The rain made the land they were camped at firmer. The rain also allowed them to easily capture rain water for ablution and other needs. Chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 11:

“[Remember] when He overwhelmed you with drowsiness [giving] security from Him and sent down upon you from the sky, rain by which to purify you and remove from you the evil [suggestions] of Satan and to make steadfast your hearts and plant firmly thereby your feet.”

This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 4, Pages 271-272.

The drowsiness they were granted was due to a sense of security which Allah, the Exalted, placed in their hearts which protected them from the whisperings of the Devil. If they were terrified they would not have slept. This sleep also allowed them to be fully rested before the battle. The only one

who did not sleep was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He spent the night praying and supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, for victory. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 1161.

The quoted verse also indicates that when things do not seem to be optimal, one should remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as blessings and success will be granted to them irrespective of how the situation appears.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims not to question destiny as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages Muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdom behind it because of their short sightedness. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it in fact was bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Divine Blessings and Support

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Allah, the Exalted, initially showed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to be few in the sight of the non-Muslims and vice versa, so that the battle would take place and so that the truth could prevail over falsehood. One of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, judged the enemy number to be 70 and the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, by his side, judged the enemy to be 100. But once the battle commenced Allah, the Exalted, showed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to be twice the number of the non-Muslims in order to strike fear in their hearts thereby giving aid to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The actual numbers were around 310 Muslims against 1000 non-Muslims. Chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 44:

“And [remember] when He showed them to you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He made you [appear] as few in their eyes so that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined...”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 13:

“Already there has been for you a sign in the two armies which met [in combat at Badr] - one fighting in the cause of Allah and another of

disbelievers. They saw them [to be] twice their [own] number by [their] eyesight. But Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Indeed in that is a lesson for those of vision.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 269.

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.

True Hope

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Before the battle commenced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, persistently and ardently supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, to grant victory to them. His pleas to Allah, the Exalted, were so intense that his cloak would slip down off his shoulders when he raised his hands in supplication. Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, was with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and would reposition his cloak for him and out of sympathy, he requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to lessen his intensity as Allah, the Exalted, would fulfill His promise and grant him victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 273.

As the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the perfect servant of Allah, the Exalted, he did not stop turning and supplicating to his Lord and Master. Whereas, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, during this event was at the station of true hope in Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

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

The Help of Allah (SWT)

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On that day the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, not to kill certain people who were on the side of the non-Muslims as they had come to the battlefield reluctantly. In addition, he forbade the killing of a man, Abu Al Bakhtari, as he protected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca and annulled the document boycotting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, before he migrated to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 290.

As Abu Al Bakhtari helped the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, Allah, the Exalted, aided him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a Muslim as long as they are helping others. A Muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything a successful outcome is guaranteed. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

In addition, this incident also warns against bad companionship, as these people were coerced to joining the non-Muslims of Mecca during this battle out of their loyalty to them.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Advising Sincerely

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Before the battle commenced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed one of the non-Muslims leaders, Utbah Ibn Rabee'ah, amongst the non-Muslim army. He then commented that if anyone amongst the non-Muslim army had goodness in them it was him and if the army obeyed him they would act rightly. Meanwhile, Utbah urged the non-Muslims to return home and not engage in battle. He reminded them that many of the Muslims were their relatives and if they were killed then the Meccans might win the battle but when they return home they would have enmity for each other, as they killed each other's relatives. Abu Jahl desired the destruction of Islam at all costs and accused of him being a coward only to urge him and others to fight. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 962.

Though Utbah was a non-Muslim, none the less he showed some sincerity to his fellow people while on the other hand Abu Jahl showed insincerity to everyone by advising them to fight and kill their own relatives, all for the sake of worldly gain.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single

Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

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

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

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

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so

that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

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

Honouring Promises

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Hudaifa Bin Yamaan and his father, may Allah be pleased with them, were both migrating from Mecca to join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the Battle of Badr. On the way they were captured by the non-Muslims of Mecca but they managed to convince them that their intention was to go to Medina and not join the army of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at Badr. They took a pledge to this affect with the non-Muslims. When they eventually reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, close to Badr and informed him of what occurred, he told them to fulfil their promise and continue to Medina instead of joining their heavily outnumbered army, a ratio of 3 to 1. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1055-1056.

Even in such a dire situation the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised them not to break their promise.

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

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

The Duel

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. Before the fighting commenced three non-Muslims challenged three Muslims to single combat. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Hamza Ibn Abdul Mutalib and Ubaidah Bin Harith, may Allah be pleased with them, took part in this duel against three non-Muslim leaders. Ali and Hamza, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame their opponents and killed them. Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, mortally wounded his opponent but was also mortally wounded himself. When he was carried to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the latter confirmed that he was a martyr. Before he died, Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that the following poem said by Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was more applicable to him: "We shall protect him (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) until we are wounded and fall dead around him. Being totally oblivious of our own children and wives." This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, *Hayatus Sahabah*, Volume 1, Pages 500-501 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 219.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 19:

"These are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water."

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, Number 2835.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a

solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself 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.

Bravery

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. During the battle the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nearest to the enemy than anyone else and he was the bravest man that day. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 282.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the bravest of men. During the Battle of Badr he remained with and defended the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from every attack. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 13.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims to avoid being cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one

to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

Help from the Heavens

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. During the battle Allah, the Exalted, sent thousands of Angels to help the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 12:

"[Remember] when your Lord inspired to the angels, "I am with you, so strengthen those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so strike [them] upon the necks and strike from them every fingertip."

On one occasion a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, pursued a non-Muslim soldier and heard the noise of a whip and someone speaking even though no one else was present. He found the non-Muslim dead. When he informed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, what had occurred, he confirmed that was an Angel from the third Heaven. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4588.

On another occasion, an Angel helped a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, capture the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Abdul Muttalib, who was

coerced by the non-Muslims of Mecca to join them during this battle. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, Number 948.

During the battle, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, threw a handful of sand and pebbles in the direction of the non-Muslim army which reached the eyes of every non-Muslim soldier and distracted them from fighting. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 17:

“...And you threw not when you threw, but it was Allāh who threw...”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 977-978 and in Imam Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 8:17, Page 82.

Allah, the Exalted, safeguards and preserves the creation and takes care of them with special care. He protects the obedient from the plots and traps of the Devil and He safeguards the disobedient from His immediate punishment in order to give them an opportunity to sincerely repent.

A Muslim should act on this divine name by using the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, but always trust in His divine care and choices in every situation and outcome they face even if they do not observe the wisdom behind some choices. This inspires patience and even

contentment with the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

A Muslim should also understand that they will only be protected from misguidance and punishment by the Guardian namely, Allah, the Exalted. This removes any signs of pride and ensures they seek His protection through sincere obedience to Him. A Muslim must act on this divine name by safeguarding every trust they possess such as their blessings by using them according to the teachings of Islam. They should safeguard their actions and speech from the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they receive more blessings from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

A Bad Companion

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. The Devil in the form of a human joined the army of the non-Muslims and encouraged them to battle while promising to protect and aid them. But after the Devil witnessed the Angels descending from the Heavens to aid the Muslim army he withdrew and retreated from the battlefield with his minions. When he was criticized by the non-Muslims he replied that he witnessed what they could not see and feared Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 288.

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

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

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

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

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

Perceiving the Hereafter

During the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to fight the non-Muslims and promised them Paradise in return. When Umayr Bin Hamaam, may Allah be pleased with him, heard this promise, he threw down some dates he was eating, took up his sword and fought until he was martyred. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, *Hayatus Sahabah*, Volume 1, Pages 409-410.

Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, responded in this way as he adopted the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

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...”

Uncompromising in Faith

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. In this battle, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, confronted and killed his maternal uncle, Aas Ibn Hashim. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 93-94.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not allow any relationship to overcome his sincerity and loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, during this battle the son of Abu Bakr, Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with them, was fighting on the side of the non-Muslims. Years later, after accepting Islam, he told his father that during the Battle of Badr, he had an opportunity to attack him but withheld his hand out of respect for him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be please with him, replied that if he had an opportunity on that day to fight and kill him, he would have. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 12.

The non-Muslim brother of Mus'ab Bin Umayr, was captured by another Companion, may Allah be pleased with them. Mus'ab told the Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, to take a high ransom from the prisoner's mother, as she was wealthy. When his non-Muslim brother mentioned his family tie to him, he replied that the Companion, may Allah be pleased

with him, was his brother and not him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 226.

During the Battle of Badr, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, fought and killed his father. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 58 Al Mujadila, verse 22:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit¹ from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 58:22, Page 150.

Muslims must adopt this uncompromising attitude, if they desire success in both worlds.

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

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

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

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

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and

religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Hating for Allah (SWT)

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After the battle was over and the non-Muslims were defeated, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the bodies of the non-Muslims to be placed in an old well. Abu Hudhaifah Bin Utbah, may Allah be pleased with him, became visibly sad when he witnessed his dead non-Muslim father. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned his reaction, he replied that he did not have doubts about his faith but was sad as he desired for his father to accept Islam and not die in disbelief. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not rebuke him and instead spoke comforting words to him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 226.

This indicates the importance of not hating non-Muslims but to instead desire and hope good for them while remaining firm on the teachings of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim's faith.

One of these characteristics is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such

as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Consequences of Actions

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place.

The archenemy of Islam, Abu Jahl, was killed by two young Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. When he was pointed out to them, they charged at him until they mortally wounded him. Then, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, found Abu Jahl in his last breath and finished him off. This has been discussed in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, Numbers 3988 and 4020.

After the battle was over and the non-Muslims were defeated, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the bodies of the non-Muslims to be placed in an old well. After this was done he called out to them, enumerating those in the well, and asked if they had found what Allah, the Exalted, promised them, as he was given exactly what Allah, the Exalted, promised him. When he was questioned about calling out to the dead, he replied that they could hear his words but they could not reply. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 300.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the

actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Seeking the Hereafter

After the Battle of Badr, some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, disputed over the spoils of war, as some of them collected it, others pursued the non-Muslim soldiers to ensure they did not return and others remained guarding the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from a surprise attack. This dispute led to Allah, the Exalted, entrusting all of it to His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 1:

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the bounties [of war]. Say, “The bounties is for Allah and the Messenger.” So fear Allah and amend that which is between you and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you should be believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in turn divided it up equally between the soldiers. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 4, Page 253 and in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 134.

Generally speaking, this verse encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to focus on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of focusing on worldly gain. Though it is important to note, gaining spoils was always seen as a bonus for them, something they were not bothered about if they gained or lost it. Their intention was always to fight in order to please Allah, the Exalted. If they were only interested in spoils

of war, it did not make sense to fight on the side of the Muslim army in any of their battles, as they were often outnumbered and outmatched in terms of power and weaponry. The dispute that arose was after the battle was concluded and the bonus of gaining spoils was granted to them.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why they worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the

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

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

The Divine Decision

Prior to leaving Mecca for the Battle of Badr, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca held onto the drapes of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, and pleaded to Allah, the Exalted, to grant victory to the group He favoured. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 19:

“If you [disbelievers] seek the decision [i.e., victory] - the decision [i.e., defeat] has come to you. And if you desist [from hostilities], it is best for you; but if you return [to war], We will return, and never will you be availed by your [large] company at all, even if it should increase; and [that is] because Allāh is with the believers.”

This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 4, Pages 281-282 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 8:19, Page 82.

Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled their plea and granted victory to the Muslims. Therefore, the non-Muslims of Mecca should have paid attention to this clear sign and sincerely repented to Allah, the Exalted.

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things

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

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

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

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

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

The Captives of the Battle of Badr

A Merciful Act

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consulted his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do with their prisoners of war. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised to execute them for their many crimes and acts of war. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked this suggestion. Then, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested to pardon them from execution and instead allow them to purchase their own freedom. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with this advice and acted on it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 305.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

A Just Punishment

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consulted his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do with their prisoners of war. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised to execute them for their many crimes and acts of war. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked this suggestion. Then, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested to pardon them from execution and instead allow them to purchase their own freedom. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with this advice and acted on it. The next day, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, weeping. When he questioned their behaviour, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that Allah, the Exalted, had shown him the punishment that would have afflicted them for taking ransom for the prisoners instead of executing them. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verses 67-68:

“It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] until he inflicts a massacre [upon Allāh's enemies] in the land. You [i.e., some Muslims] desire the commodities of this world, but Allāh desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise. If not for a decree from Allāh that preceded, you would have been touched for what you took by a great punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 305 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4588.

Executing the prisoners was a just punishment for their crimes and would have acted as a strong deterrent against the violent behaviour of the non-Muslims of Mecca. This deterrent, in the long run, might have prevented further battles thereby saving lives.

Showing Gentleness

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims, some prisoners of war were taken including Suhayl Bin Amr, a non-Muslim leader. He was very vocal in opposing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life in Mecca and as a result Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission to punish him so that it would prevent him from speaking against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that if he allowed the torturing of people then Allah, the Exalted, would allow him to be tortured even though he was His Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He added that perhaps Suhayl would one day stand up to do something which would prevent him (and others) from criticizing him. Suhayl, may Allah be pleased with him, eventually accepted Islam and after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when some Muslim tribes apostatized from Islam, he stood up in Mecca and urged them to hold fast to Islam and threatened them all if they apostatized. This was one of the main reasons why Mecca remained firm on Islam at that time. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1026-1027.

The gentleness shown to Suhayl, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged him to accept the truthfulness of Islam and remain firm on it.

The beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

“...And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers...”

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh

destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

“And said, "I am your most exalted lord.””

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

Legacy of the Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH)

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims, some prisoners of war were taken including the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib. The Companions, including Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, criticized Abbas for his unbelief and addressed him in a harsh way. Abbas questioned why they all mentioned his bad deeds and not his good deeds. Then he went on to enumerate some of them, which included: tending to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, serving as the gatekeepers to it and providing water for the pilgrims during the pilgrimage season. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 17-18:

“It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allāh [while] witnessing against themselves with disbelief. [For] those, their deeds have become worthless, and in the Fire they will abide eternally. The mosques of Allāh are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakāh and do not fear except Allāh, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 9:17, Pages 85-86.

The leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca would often boast that they were superior to all others, such as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they, prior to the conquest of Mecca, were the custodians of the House of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca, the Kaaba. They would only serve the pilgrims to the House of Allah, the Exalted, in order to show-off and gain the respect of people. This claim was rooted in the fact that they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, the one who build the House of Allah, the Exalted, and to whom the acts of the Holy Pilgrimage are originally attributed to. So in their eyes their custodianship was the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him.

But in these verses Allah, the Exalted, reminded the non-Muslim Arabs that as they chose to reject the clear truth of Islam they were no longer fit to carry the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and it would instead be given to those who practically followed his way namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. If the non-Muslim Arabs remained firm on their disobedience then they would not benefit from the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in this world or the next.

This therefore reminds Muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today

believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

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

Love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims some prisoners of war were taken including the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, who later became Muslim. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, to accept Islam and commented that him accepting Islam would please him more than if his own father accepted Islam, as this would greatly please the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 307-308.

This was an indication of the sincerity Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Best Conduct

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to raid a caravan belonging to the non-Muslims of Mecca, which eventually unintentionally led to the Battle of Badr, he ordered his son-in-law Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, to stay in Medina and nurse his wife, the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Ruqayya, may Allah be pleased with her, as she was severely sick and eventually passed away from this sickness. On his return to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, a share of the war booty thereby clearly indicating that he was considered a participant of the Battle of Badr. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 315.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A Muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands,

refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A Muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Spreading News

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. He sent ahead two of his Companions, Zayd Bin Haritha and Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with them, into Medina in order to give the city the good news of victory. When they arrived in Medina they began telling everyone what had occurred at Badr. Some hypocrites began to spread rumors in Medina that the Muslim army was defeated and the two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were confused. This caused confusion and fear to spread within the city. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 316.

It is important for Muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many Muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting Muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between Muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A Muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent Muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

Sublime Character

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. He entrusted the prisoners of Badr to the Companions, may Allah be pleased them, and commanded them to behave well towards them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would give their best food to the prisoners namely, bread and consume the lowest quality of food themselves namely, dates. They would also allow the prisoners to ride their mounts while they themselves walked. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 319, and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 1020.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

Soft and Merciful Nature

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. One of the prisoners of Badr claimed he was very poor and did not have enough wealth to ransom himself. He appealed to the soft nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked him to set him free. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, showed mercy to him and fulfilled his request on the condition that he would not fight against Islam again. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 326-327.

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.

Never Tricked Twice

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. One of the prisoners of Badr claimed he was very poor and did not have enough wealth to ransom himself. He appealed to the soft nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked him to set him free. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, showed mercy to him and fulfilled his request on condition that he would not fight against Islam again. But after being released, he broke his promise and fought against Islam with the non-Muslims. He was captured again by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in another battle, the Battle of Uhud. He requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to release him again but he replied that a believer is not bitten from the same hole twice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 326-327.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted.

A true believer does not blindly trust people thereby increasing the chances of being wronged by them. But if they are fooled by anyone they should overlook and pardon as this leads to their forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

But they should also change their behaviour by treading cautiously when dealing with this person thereby ensuring they do not get fooled again. There is a vast difference between forgiving others and blindly trusting them especially, after they have wronged someone.

This Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

No Preferential Treatment

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, released some of the prisoners of Badr without a ransom he however made sure the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took a ransom for his own uncle, Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, even though the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, offered to release him for free as he was the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, Abbas had to pay more than anyone else for his freedom. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 345.

Abul As, the non-Muslim son-in-law of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was also captured during the Battle of Badr. Abul As's wife, Zainab, may Allah be pleased with her, sent her necklace to her father, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as ransom for her husband. The necklace belonged to her mother, and the first wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Khadija Bint Khuwaylid, may Allah be pleased with her. On seeing the necklace, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, became extremely emotional. Even in this state he did not use his position of authority to influence the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, into releasing his son-in-law. They chose to release Abul As and return the necklace back to Zainab, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 231.

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a Muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

Gaining Better

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina. The uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, who was a prisoner of war was forced to purchase his freedom. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verses 70-71:

“O Prophet, say to whoever is in your hands of the captives, “If Allāh knows [any] good in your hearts, He will give you [something] better than what was taken from you, and He will forgive you; and Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.” But if they intend to betray you - then they have already betrayed Allāh before, and He empowered [you] over them. And Allāh is Knowing and Wise.”

Later on Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam and was compensated for what he lost during the Battle of Badr with twenty (or forty according to another reference) servants and he always hoped Allah, the Exalted, would also forgive him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1021-1022.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the importance of sincerely obeying and submitting to Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to good in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to a person.

Those who disbelieve or avoid acting on their faith in Islam do so out of love for the material world and the things within it. They believe that believing or acting on their faith will prevent them from enjoying worldly blessings meaning, for them faith is something that restricts their desires and therefore they turn away from it either literally or practically. Instead they turn towards the material world and strive to fulfill their desires without restrictions believing that true peace lies in this. They look down at those who accept and actualize their faith by controlling their actions and using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They believe that these pious Muslims are lowly slaves who have been restricted from enjoying themselves whereas they, the disbelievers and the misguided, are free. But in actual fact this could not be further from the truth as the real slaves are those who fail to accept and submit to Allah, the Exalted, and the superior ones are those who have done this as they become free of slavery to the world. This can be understood by an example. A good parent will restrict the type of food their child eats meaning, they will only let them eat junk and unhealthy food once in a while and instead force them to follow a healthy diet. This child therefore believes that their parent has placed undesirable restrictions on them and that they have become slaves to their parent and their healthy diet. On the other hand another child has been given permission from their parent to eat whatever they desire, whenever they desire and how much they desire. So this child believes that they are completely free of all restrictions. When these children come together the child who has been given complete freedom criticizes and looks down on the child who has been restricted by their parent. The latter child will also feel sorry for themselves when they observe the other child has been given free reign to behave however they wish. Outwardly it appears the child who has been granted freedom has obtained happiness whereas the other child is too tied up with restrictions to enjoy life. But years down the line the truth will become manifest. The child who had no restrictions grows up to become extremely unhealthy e.g. obesity,

diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result of this they even become mentally unhealthy as they lose confidence in their body and the way they look. Because of this they become a slave of medications, diseases, mental and social problems. All these things restrict their happiness and life. Whereas, the child who was restricted by their parent grows up healthy in mind and body. As a result they become confident in their body and ability, which aids them to succeed in life. They become free of any slavery to medications, diseases, mental and social problems as they grew up with the correct balance and guidance. So the child who had no restrictions grew up becoming a slave to many things, whereas the child who had restrictions grew up independent of all restrictions.

To conclude, the real slave is the one who becomes a slave to all other things except Allah, the Exalted, such as social media, society, fashion and culture, and this leads to mental, physical and social problems, whereas the real free person is the one who submits only to Allah, the Exalted, thereby achieving peace of mind and body.

Importance of Education

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, headed back to Medina with some prisoners of war. Some of these prisoners had no ransom money available to free themselves so the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had some of them work off their ransom by teaching the children of Medina how to write. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 345.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have made these prisoners work off their ransom in different ways, such as physical labor e.g. farming, but he chose to use them in a more important way. This indicates the importance of education and 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.

How to Win

The non-Muslims of Mecca fell into great anxiety when they received news of the great loss they sustained and how many of their chiefs had been killed during the Battle of Badr. Abu Lahab, excused himself from the battle and sent someone in his place and therefore escaped the massacre. After the defeated non-Muslim army returned to Mecca, Abu Lahab, questioned one of the men about the events which took place during the battle. The man recounted how he saw strange men on horses who were destroying their army. Abu Raafai, the servant of Abbas Ibn Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with them, was a Muslim at the time but concealed his faith. He overheard this conversation and exclaimed that these were Angels. Abu Lahab then struck and beat Abu Raafai, may Allah be pleased with him. Umm Fadl, the wife of Abbas Ibn Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with them, was also a Muslim, struck Abu Lahab in the head with a tent pole. Abu Lahab then left the gathering. A few days later he died of a grotesque illness where his body became covered with ulcers. No one approached his corpse for days out of fear of being infected with what he had. After his sons were criticized for leaving their father's corpse they hired some men to drag his corpse to his gravesite and hurled stones on him from a distance until he was buried. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 227 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1032-1033.

Two prisoners from the Battle of Badr, Nadr Bin Harith and Uqbah Ibn Abu Muait, were executed on the orders of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is because they went to great lengths to inflict severe harm on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, while they were living in Mecca and were key influencers within the Meccan society who encouraged the spread of corruption and evil. On

one occasion, prior to the migration to Medina, Uqbah would have strangled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to death if Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, had not intervened. Their execution was also a strong deterrent and clear message to the enemies of Islam, that the Muslims were not afraid to defend themselves. This deterrent prevented many potential fights and attacks which would have led to many lives being lost. Finally, it was clear from their past and present conduct that if they were ransomed they would have continued to spread corruption and evil on a large scale. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 229.

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

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

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

Second Chances

After the Battle of Badr, Umayr Bin Wahb was sitting with Safwan Bin Umayya in the Masjid Ul Haram in Mecca. Umayr was especially angry about the Battle of Badr as his son was taken captive by the Muslims. Umayr told Safwan that if it was not for his family in Mecca who had no one to take care of them he would go to Medina on a suicide mission to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Safwan encouraged him to fulfil his evil plan and promised him that he would take care of his family. Umayr prepared his sword by dipping it into poison and headed for Medina. When he arrived in Medina, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, spotted him and was very familiar with his evil and foul nature. He physically escorted Umayr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ensure no harm came to the latter. When they reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he told Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to let Umayr go and questioned him about his trip. Umayr tried to be evasive and commented that he only came to ensure the prisoners of war were being treated with respect. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then informed him of his plan and the secret conversation he had with Safwan in Mecca. As no one else was listening to their conversation, Umayr realised the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam, may Allah be pleased with him. Then he sought permission to return to Mecca in order to spread Islam and oppose polytheism, just like he opposed Islam prior to accepting it. When he was granted permission he returned to Mecca and openly encouraged people to accept Islam and because of him many people accepted it. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 327-329.

Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, took his second chance at accepting Islam instead of behaving stubbornly. Then he strived hard to spread Islam for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This indicates the importance of avoiding stubbornness in all aspects of life.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person

understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Two-Face Behaviour

The non-Muslim chief, Abu Sufyan, vowed to take revenge for the Battle of Badr. He headed to the outskirts of Medina with 200 men. He spent the night with Sallam Ibn Mishkam, the chief of the Jewish tribe, the Banu An Nadir. Sallam, hosted Abu Sufyan and reported all the information he had about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In the morning, Abu Sufyan and his men attacked the outskirts of Medina and managed to kill a Companion from Medina, may Allah be pleased with him. When the news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he pursued Abu Sufyan with an army but Abu Sufyan managed to escape. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 138.

The chief of the Jewish tribe, Sallam, broke the agreement of peace he had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by hosting Abu Sufyan and divulging the information he had gathered about the Muslims. Many of these non-Muslim tribes in and around Medina behaved in this manner out of enmity for Islam.

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

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

Being Upright

After the Battle of Badr was over Zainab, may Allah be pleased with him, the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the face of great difficulties, migrated to her father in Medina. At the time her husband, Abul As, was still a non-Muslim who allowed her to migrate, as this was one of the conditions stipulated in his release when he was captured as a prisoner of war during the Battle of Badr. After her migration, he left for Syria on a trading journey. On his way back he was ambushed and robbed of all the wealth he had, most of it belonging to the non-Muslims of Mecca, who sent him to trade on their behalf. He managed to escape and reached Medina where he sought protection from his wife, Zainab, may Allah be pleased with her. She granted him protection and in turn so did the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also requested the people who raided his trading caravan to return the goods, as they had a peace pact between them, and they agreed. Abul As returned to Mecca with his trading goods and returned all the wealth to their owners. Once he finished doing this he declared his Islam and commented that he waited until he returned the goods of the non-Muslims of Mecca before declaring his Islam as he did not desire them to believe that he only accepted Islam in order to keep their wealth. Then he migrated to Medina and lived with his wife, may Allah be pleased with both of them. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 350.

Abul As, may Allah be pleased with him, could have kept the wealth he was entrusted with and remained in Medina but he instead remained upright and concluded his business deal as agreed.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Breaking Bonds

Shas Bin Qais, a jealous elderly non-Muslim living in Medina, once passed a gathering of the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. The Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, were originally from two main tribes, the Aws and Khazraj. These two tribes had been warring with each other for generations and only became united when they accepted Islam. When Shas observed the great love and affection the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, had for each other, even though a few years earlier to that they were sworn enemies, his hatred for Islam intensified. He encouraged a young poet to speak some words about an old battle that occurred between the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj, where many of their prominent leaders were killed. This poetry incited the ancient old negative feelings that had been buried away by Islam thereby causing some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to argue with each other. Before any fighting took place, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of what occurred and he made his way to them and reminded them of the new era they had moved into. A new era away from ignorant practices and senseless violence in the name of tribal loyalty. These negative feelings were quickly extinguished by these prophetic words until the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, corrected their attitude and behaviour towards each other and returned to their brotherly love for one another. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 236-237.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 100:

“O you who have believed, if you obey a party of those who were given the Scripture, they would turn you back, after your belief, [to being] unbelievers.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 3:100, Page 38.

Generally speaking, a Muslim must avoid speaking negatively about others as this creates negative feelings in the hearts of people.

In a Hadith found in *Sunan Abu Dawud*, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others as this causes ill feelings towards them in people's hearts.

It is often observed that families especially, from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one of the biggest complaints family members, such as parents often have. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads

to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another they will get affected by it even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly none the less it still affects their hearts. If one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson for example, if a mother desires to teach one of her children not to behave as their sibling did they then should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, Muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publically. Otherwise, they may well find as time passes their family becomes separated and emotionally distant from one another.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA) Marries Fatima Bint Muhammad (PBUH)

A Wise Proposal

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, proposed marriage to the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Fatima, may Allah be pleased with her. This was agreed and the marriage took place. Her dowry was a chain mail armor worth a paltry sum of four silver coins. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 368.

The first thing to note is that the dowry was a paltry sum. This indicates the importance of keeping marriages simple and cost-effective, something, which many Muslims today easily overlook.

In addition, Muslims must strive to acquire the correct spouse by choosing one based on the teachings of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is

married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a Muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Simple Living

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and his wife Fatima, may Allah pleased with them, led an extremely simple life, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They gave priority to preparing for the hereafter and helping others over enjoying worldly luxuries. For example, he once said that he possessed no furniture in his home except for a ram's skin on which they slept.

Both of them worked for a living and struggled to fulfill the basic necessities of life. Once, when some prisoners of war were brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they requested him to give them a servant to help them with their chores. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused as he desired to sell the prisoners and spend the price on the poor of Medina. He gave priority to others over his own family. Later that night, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught both of them a spiritual exercise to read before going to bed and commented that this spiritual exercise was better than obtaining a servant. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 147-149.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

The 3rd Year After Migration

Being Trustworthy

Whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed from Medina he always appointed someone trustworthy in charge to manage its affairs until he returned. For example, in the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he left for an expedition known as Dhu Amarr and appointed Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 1.

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

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

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

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

Taking Revenge

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he left for an expedition. During this expedition the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took a nap under a tree. The non-Muslim army took this opportunity by stealthily sending a soldier to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with the intention to assassinate him. He startled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and while brandishing his sword asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who would protect him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confidently replied that Allah, the Exalted, would. The Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, then pushed the man to the ground. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, picked up his sword and asked the same question the soldier asked him. The soldier pleaded with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to release him and he did so without punishing him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 1-2.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Nobility in Islam

Whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed from Medina he always appointed someone trustworthy in charge to manage its affairs until he returned. For example, in the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he left for an expedition to a place called Buhran and appointed a blind and poor Companion, Ibn Umm Maktum, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 2.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

The Banu Qaynuqa

True Loyalty

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Jewish tribe, the Banu Qaynuqa, who were living in Medina, persistently broke their pact of peace and fought against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They behaved in this manner even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly reminded them of the fact that they recognized him as the last Prophet of Allah, the Exalted, as he was described in their divine scriptures. But they stubbornly rejected Islam and instead threatened and fought against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Due to worldly benefits, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who had allied with the Banu Qaynuqa before the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, insisted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, avoid harming them and he stayed loyal to them even though they broke their pact with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas a Companion, Ubada Bin Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, who also had an old alliance with Banu Qaynuqa openly renounced his alliance with them and instead reaffirmed his alliance with Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 51:

“O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”

And chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 56:

“And whoever is an ally of Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed - indeed, the party of Allah - they will be the predominant.”

As a result of the intercession of Abdullah Bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed the non-Muslim tribe, the Banu Qaynuqa, to leave Medina peacefully after he besieged them and they surrendered without fighting, even after they repeatedly betrayed their pact of peace with the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 3-4.

One must follow in the footsteps of Ubada Bin Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, by maintaining their loyalty to Islam and the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, under all occasions.

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

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

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

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

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and

religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Bad Advice

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Jewish scholar and an aggressive enemy of Islam, Ka'b Bin Ashraf, visited Mecca in order to incite them further against Islam. A non-Muslim leader of Mecca asked him who was more rightly guided and favored by Allah, the Exalted, the idol worshippers of Mecca or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam. Ka'b replied that the idol worshippers of Mecca were more rightly guided. This was a foolish answer as being a Jewish scholar he very well knew that idol worshipping was far from right guidance. On this occasion Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 51:

“Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Scripture, who believe in jibt [superstition] and ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and say about the disbelievers, “These are better guided than the believers as to the way?””

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 7.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is because obedience leads to success and safety in both this world and in the hereafter. A person who does not desire safety

and success for a person can never truly love them irrespective of what they claim or how they treat the other person. The same way a person becomes happy when their beloved obtains worldly success, like a job, they will also desire their beloved to obtain success in the hereafter. If a person does not care about another obtaining safety and success especially, in the next world then they do not love them.

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Punishment for Treason

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Jewish scholar and an aggressive enemy of Islam, Ka'b Bin Ashraf, repeatedly broke his pact of peace with the head of state, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He continued to incite the non-Muslims of Mecca, Medina and surrounding areas against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result of his many acts of treason, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the order for his execution. Muhammad Bin Maslama, may Allah be pleased with him, held a secret meeting with Ka'b during the night and killed him. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 5-6 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4037.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way

which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Keeping Conversations Private

When the daughter of Umar Ibn Khattab, Hafsa, may Allah be pleased with them, became a widow, he discussed a possible marriage proposal with Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. The latter respectively declined the offer as he was not in the right position to get married. Umar then discussed a marriage proposal with Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, who did not give an immediate response. Later on, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, proposed to and married Hafsa, may Allah be pleased with her. Abu Bakr then explained to Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, that he did not initially reply as he was aware that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a desire to marry her. Instead of divulging this information he decided to guard their private conversation and therefore did not reply to him immediately. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3261.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true Muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable when it is clearly not. A Muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would then doing this betrays them which contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere

to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins such as backbiting and gossiping and prevents negative feelings being developed for each other. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed about them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam such as the one declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

What Goes Around Comes Around

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent a trading caravan with 100 thousand silver coins towards Syria. But as the Muslims were ambushing their trade caravans they decided to go through a different route, across Najd to Iraq. But this information was leaked to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who dispatched Zaid Bin Haritha, with 100 horsemen, may Allah be pleased with them, to capture the caravan. They managed to overpower the men escorting the trading caravan and as a result the non-Muslims fled and the Muslims captured the wealth and three prisoners of war, one of which ended up accepting Islam a short while after. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 243-244.

The same way, years earlier, prior to migrating to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were subjected to a social boycott in Mecca whereby their wealth and food supplies were completely cut-off, Allah, the Exalted, subjected the non-Muslims of Mecca to a similar situation whereby their trading routes were cut-off by the Muslims.

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

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

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

The Battle of Uhud

An Evil Conversation

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca gathered with the non-Muslims who had lost their relatives at the Battle of Badr. They declared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had caused them great harm and killed their elite and relatives. They urged them to financially and physically support them in taking revenge. The thirst for revenge and their ongoing financial troubles caused by the Muslims raiding their trading caravans urged them to fight when it should have urged them to become humble and accept the truth. They all pledged their allegiance to this evil campaign which eventually led to the Battle of Uhud. On this occasion Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 36:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 12.

This incident is connected to chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when Muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a Muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Being Grateful to People

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, released a non-Muslim prisoner of war after the Battle of Badr, Abu Azza Al Jumahi, as he was poor and could not afford his ransom. A non-Muslim leader urged Abu Azza to aid them by encouraging a non-Muslim tribe to join their campaign. Even though he admitted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was kind to him and he did not desire to oppose him eventually he was convinced to join the campaign against Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 12-13.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing

and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Guarding Conversations

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. The news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through his uncle, Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was in Mecca at the time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, held a secret meeting with the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and sought their advice. Before the meeting ended he told them to keep the information secret lest the enemies of Islam within Medina find out and tip off the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1098-1100.

In a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true Muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable when it is clearly not. A Muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would then doing this betrays them which contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in *Sunan An Nasai*,

number 4204. It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins such as backbiting and gossiping and prevents negative feelings being developed for each other. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed about them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam such as the one declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

Asking for Advice

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. When the non-Muslim army reached close to Uhud the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had a dream which suggested that the Muslim army should remain in Medina and confront the enemy within the city. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informed his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, about his dream and asked for their advice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 14.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most knowledgeable and was divinely guided yet he sought counsel from others in order to establish a good practice for others.

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

“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

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

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

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

Desiring Peace

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. When the non-Muslim army reached close to Uhud the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had a dream which suggested that the Muslim army should remain in Medina and confront the enemy within the city. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, agreed with this plan as he did not desire to confront the army. But the young Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had not witnessed the Battle of Badr, kept urging him to march forward and meet the non-Muslim army in Uhud, which he eventually agreed to. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, put on his battle armor, the young Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, realized their error and advised the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to revert back to his initial suggestion meaning, confront the non-Muslim army within Medina. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that it was not proper for a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, to take off his battle armor without confronting the enemies of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 14.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not change the decision even though his dream indicated that staying in Medina was preferred, as he wanted to set a good example for all leaders till the end of time. A good leader does not behave in a fickle manner by changing their commands without a valid reason, such as obtaining new information regarding the enemy. Behaving in this manner would only cause the soldiers to lose confidence in their leader, something extremely dangerous during a time of war. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, remained firm on his command to march out to Uhud.

In addition, even though a Muslim should always be ready to defend Islam, themselves, their relatives, the innocent and their properties yet they should not be so eager for confrontation. Instead, they should prefer peace and safety.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2346, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever wakes up in the morning safe from danger, healthy and having food for the day is as if the world was gathered for them.

In this day and age where many people around the world are living in unsafe countries a Muslim who has been blessed with safety should make use of it by using their freedom to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. For example, they should take advantage of journeying to the Mosques for the congregational prayers and religious gatherings of knowledge.

In addition, Muslims should extend this sense of security to others irrespective of their faith so that the whole society becomes secure from danger. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a person cannot be a true Muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

Simply put, a Muslim should treat others in the same way they desire to be treated by people.

A Muslim must take advantage of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, as it is a blessing which is often only truly appreciated until it is lost. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Those who make good use of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, will find that they will receive His support when they eventually lose their good health. But those who fail to make use of this blessing are unlikely to receive this support. It is important to note, making use of one's health includes striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents.

One of the major concerns of a person is their provision. A Muslim should remember that it 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. The one who obtains their daily provision should concern themselves with their other duties and plan for tomorrow without stressing as their provision is guaranteed.

Using Means and Trusting in Allah (SWT)

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wore two sets of armor during this battle, one suit of chain-mail armor above the other. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 19.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, adopted both aspects of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. The first is using the means one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The other is believing that the outcome, which Allah, the Exalted, alone decides, will be best for everyone involved.

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

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah,

the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

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

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

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

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

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

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

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

Choosing Suitable Companions

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to confront the enemies at Uhud, he encountered a battalion who were marching to join the Muslims in battle. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed that they were non-Muslims from Medina who were allies of the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and had come to support the Muslims in this battle, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned whether they had accepted Islam. When he was told they remained firm on their faith, he rejected their assistance and stated that he would not take the aid of disbelievers against the polytheists of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 249.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heavily outnumbered, an initial ratio of 3 to 1 which became 4 to 1 before the battle commenced, he still refused to seek aid from disbelievers as he fulfilled the two aspects of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. The first is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided, which he did by organizing the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to fight, and the second was to believe that whatever Allah, the Exalted, decides is best for everyone involved, a belief he always possessed to the highest level.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was well aware of the constant plotting and scheming of the non-Muslims of Medina against Islam, even though they had signed peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If he then allowed them to join his army, they may have turned on the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, during the battle, which would have led to a major disaster for them. Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused to accept their assistance during the battle.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of avoiding bad companionship.

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

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

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

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

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

Hypocrites Abandon Muslim Army at Uhud

All Talk No Action

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to confront the enemies at Uhud, initially the leader of the hypocrites Abdullah Bin Ubayy agreed to take part in the battle with his people. As they approached Uhud, Abdullah Bin Ubayy retreated with his 300 men and the Muslim army was left with 700 men against a non-Muslim army of 3000. He used the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not follow his suggestion of fighting within Medina as an excuse to retreat with his cronies. A poor excuse for someone who claimed to be a Muslim, someone who must obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times. Besides, if he opposed the plan he could have remained in Medina but instead he chose to accompany the army up to Uhud and while the enemy could observe them, he desired to leave the Muslim army in order to weaken the resolve of the Muslims and strengthen the resolve of the non-Muslim army. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 16-17 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 250-251.

An aspect of hypocrisy is when one verbally shows support for others and their good projects such as, building a mosque but when the time comes to take part in the project such as, donating wealth they seem to

disappear. Similarly, when people are facing good times they verbally support them reminding others of their loyalty to them. But the moment the people face difficulties these hypocrites offer no emotional or physical support. Instead they criticize them. This was the attitude of the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 62:

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

Certain Faith

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to confront the enemies at Uhud, initially the leader of the hypocrites Abdullah Bin Ubayy agreed to take part in the battle with his people. As they approached Uhud Abdullah Bin Ubayy retreated with his 300 men and the Muslim army was left with 700 men against a non-Muslim army of 3000. He desired to leave the Muslim army at a critical point in order to weaken the resolve of the Muslims and strengthen the resolve of the non-Muslim army. His plan almost worked as the resolve of a few of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, weakened but their strong faith in Allah, the Exalted, overcame the whisperings of the Devil and they remained firm. Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 122, regarding this critical moment:

“When two parties among you were about to lose courage, but Allāh was their ally; and upon Allāh the believers should rely.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 250-251.

The strength of their faith prevented them from disobeying Allah, the Exalted, therefore, Muslims must strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith so that they too remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all occasions.

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...”

Remaining Firm on Faith

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to confront the enemies at Uhud, initially the leader of the hypocrites Abdullah Bin Ubayy agreed to take part in the battle with his people. As they approached Uhud, Abdullah Bin Ubayy retreated with his 300 men and the Muslim army was left with 700 men against a non-Muslim army of 3000. He desired to leave the Muslim army at a critical point in order to weaken the resolve of the Muslims and strengthen the resolve of the non-Muslim army. Abdullah Bin Haram, may Allah be pleased with him, urged the hypocrites to at least defend Medina even if they were not interested in fighting for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. But this did not affect the cowards, who continued leaving the battlefield. He then criticized them and told them that Allah, the Exalted, would suffice His Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the army did not need the help of the hypocrites. Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 167, regarding this moment:

“And that He might make evident those who are hypocrites. For it was said to them, “Come, fight in the way of Allāh or [at least] defend.” They said, “If we had known [there would be] battle, we would have followed you.” They were nearer to disbelief that day than to faith, saying with their mouths what was not in their hearts. And Allāh is most knowing of what they conceal.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 250-252.

Generally speaking, a Muslim must not adopt the mindset of a hypocrite and abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, when they face difficult times.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

An Inspirational Speech at Uhud

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. Before the battle commenced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the following speech which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1113-1114.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "O people! What Allah, the Exalted, commanded me to do in His book, I command you to do..."

This indicates the importance of leading by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to

lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “O people!...Work in His obedience and desist from the matters that He forbade...Allah is with those who obey Him and the Devil is with those who disobey Allah...”

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

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion....."

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “O people!...Today you are in a place of reward and savings at least for those among you who know their responsibilities...”

If a person was hired for a specific job, such as painting a house, they are highly unlikely to receive their wages if they decide to do another duty, such as hovering the house. Even though what they decided to do is not bad but as they have chosen to do a job they were not hired for they will undoubtedly displease their employer. This is simple to understand and accept. Similarly, a Muslim has been commanded to fulfill the commands set out in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but if they decide to do something else and neglect this duty irrespective of if the thing they decide to do is lawful, such as pursuing the excess of this material world beyond their needs, doing actions which are different from what have been prescribed in the two divine sources or simply unlawful they should not expect to please Allah, the Exalted, as He has made it clear what Muslims should be doing. The same way an employee who decides to do something different should not expect to receive their wages neither should a Muslim who decides to strive for anything other

than what they have been told to strive for by Allah, the Exalted. The wages in the case of the Muslim include blessings, mercy and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Simply put, if a Muslim desires to obtain these wages they must do their job and not busy themselves with other things which either contradicts their duty or things which are different from their duty.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “O people!...Today you are in a place of reward and savings at least for those among you who know their responsibilities and then prepare themselves to fulfill them, upon patience, certainty of faith, seriousness and activeness...”

This is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfill the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which

please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “O people!...So begin your deeds with patience upon fighting in the path of Allah and in doing so, search out for what Allah promised you...”

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

to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “O people!...You must follow what I command you to do, for indeed, I ardently want you to what is right...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his

traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "O people!...Indeed, discord, disagreement and losing heart are part of what it means to be incapable and weak, which Allah does not love, and for which Allah grants neither help nor victory."

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others

kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this.

The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart

first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Avoiding Cowardice

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. Before the battle commenced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brandished a sword and asked his soldiers if anyone would take it from him and fulfill its rights. Many of them raised their hands to take it but Abu Dujana Sammak Bin Kharsha, may Allah be pleased with him, questioned what the rights of the sword were. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him that it involved to fight with it against the enemy until it was damaged/broken. Abu Dujana, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he would take it and fulfill its rights and thus it was given to him. He then put on his red headband, which was known as the headband of death. Whenever he fought to the death he would put this red headband on. He then began to strut in between the Muslim soldiers in order to provoke the non-Muslim soldiers. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed his gait and commented that this was a walking style hated by Allah, the Exalted, except in situations like this i.e. battle. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 254-255.

During the battle, Abu Dujana, may Allah be pleased with him, killed many non-Muslims. He rushed towards a non-Muslim who was inciting the non-Muslim army to kill the Muslims. When Abu Dujana, may Allah be pleased with him, was about to kill the person with the sword that was given to him, the person shrieked and he then realized that the person was a woman, Hind Bint Utbah. He withheld his hand and did not harm her as he did not want to dishonour the sword of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, by killing a woman with it. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 260.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against behaving cowardly. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one to fail in obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

Stronger than Blood

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. Before the battle commenced the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan, sent a message to the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, urging them to step aside and leave the battle field as the non-Muslims only desired to fight the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them. He desired to turn the situation into one about brotherhood and tribes instead of the truth against falsehood. The Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, rejected his request as their loyalty to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were much deeper and stronger than tribal and blood ties.

In addition, a non-Muslim, Abu Amir Al Fasiq, who was once a prominent leader of the people of Medina, before the coming of Islam, was also on the side of the non-Muslims. He lost his status when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina and as a result of his envy he fled to Mecca and urged the non-Muslims to fight against Islam. Before the Battle of Uhud commenced, he called out to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, hoping he could persuade them to join him, but they insulted him in return. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 256.

With the passing of time people often become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Hereafter Over World

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah to collect the spoils of war this exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-30.

Even though the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not commit a sin as they believed the order no longer applied as the battle seemed to be over, yet their good and pious desire for collecting the spoils of war, to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, led to trouble. Remaining stationed where they were was connected directly to the hereafter whereas, collecting the spoils of war, to use in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, was connected to the hereafter through the material world. In this instance, the action directly connected to the hereafter was better.

One must adopt the correct perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter in order to avoid prioritizing worldly things over the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Always Sincere

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended this exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was positioned at the rear of the Muslim army, observed how the non-Muslims managed to circle around and reach the back of the Muslim army. Many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not realize what occurred and were therefore defenseless. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have remained quiet and allowed his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to be slaughtered, as the non-Muslims were not aware of the exact position of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead, he shouted and warned his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, thereby giving his position away to the non-Muslims, who rallied together to attack him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 263-264.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, showed great sincerity to his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, while putting his own life in danger.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blessed in All Situations

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The confusion and chaos increased when voices were heard claiming that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been martyred. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-30.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has

decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a Muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a Muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Continuing the Mission

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The confusion and chaos increased when voices were heard claiming that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been martyred. This caused some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to lose hope as their strength and inspiration had supposedly been martyred. But a Companion, Anas Bin Nadr, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that even if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been martyred, Allah, the Exalted, is Ever Living and cannot die. They should therefore continue fighting for what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stood for. Anas Bin Nadr, may Allah be pleased with him, continued fighting until he was martyred. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-31.

Similarly, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, believed there was no reason to live on without the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, so he broke the sheath of his sword and continued fighting until he saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He continued to protect him until they retreated. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 163-164.

Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 144, in connection to this event:

“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allāh at all; but Allāh will reward the grateful.”

Allah, the Exalted, was preparing them for his eventual death and the attitude they must show when that happened. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, eventually died, years later, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained grateful and steadfast on their faith even though some Muslim Arab tribes apostatized. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1196-1199.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is not physically amongst Muslims today none the less, they must continue to strive for what he stood for by becoming the true ambassadors of Islam. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of

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

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

All Difficulties

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. During the battle the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heavily wounded. His teeth were broken and his face and lips were cut. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 30.

During the battle, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was retreating up Mount Uhud with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, while being pursued by the non-Muslims intent on killing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sacrificed their lives in defense of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Talha Bin Ubaidullah, may Allah be pleased with him, defended him to such an extent that he was inflicted with over 30 wounds and as a result his hand became paralyzed. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 269-270.

Even though the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are protected from committing sins none the less Muslims can learn a benefit from physical and emotional injuries.

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a Muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A Muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A Muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Concern for People

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. During the battle the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heavily wounded. His teeth were broken and his face and lips were cut. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 30.

During the battle, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was retreating up Mount Uhud with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, while being pursued by the non-Muslims intent on killing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sacrificed their lives in defense of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Talha Bin Ubaidullah, may Allah be pleased with him, defended him to such an extent that he was inflicted with over 30 wounds and as a result his hand became paralyzed.

When the other Companions, such as Abu Bakr Siddique and Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with them, managed to reach the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they immediately tended to his wounds, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them to first treat the wounds of Talha Bin Ubaidullah, may Allah be pleased with him. They both insisted on treating the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, first. With his teeth, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him,

pulled out the two rings of the iron-ringed helmet of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which had been lodged into his face. Then he pulled out an arrow which struck the face of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with his teeth as well, in order to avoid harming him. As a result, his front tooth fell out. Then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, again advised them to find and aid Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, which they did. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 269-271.

Even in such dire circumstances the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was concerned for others over himself.

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

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

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

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

Desiring Guidance for All

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. During the battle the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heavily wounded. His teeth were broken and his face and lips were cut. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 30.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was so worried and aggrieved for his people that while wiping his blood from his face he asked himself that how could Allah, the Exalted, forgive the people which harmed their Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in this manner. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed the following and reassured the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that the door of forgiveness was still open for them. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 128:

“Not for you, is the decision whether He should [cut them down] or forgive them or punish them, for indeed, they are wrongdoers.”

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4027.

While facing this harm from the non-Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them as they did not possess knowledge and full understanding of what they were doing. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 268-269.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the merciful and forgiving nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt

an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Accepting and Adhering to the Truth

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. While the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was retreating up Mound Uhud with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they were being pursued by the non-Muslims. One of the leaders of the non-Muslims, Ubayy Bin Khalaf, began to shout and threaten the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was pursuing him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to allow him to approach. He then took a spear and stabbed Ubayy in the neck through a gap in his armor. Ubayy fell off his horse and screamed in pain. When the other non-Muslims carried him off and assessed his wound they found that the neck wound was barely a scratch, even though Ubayy was moaning as if he was being physically tortured. He then told them that he would die from this wound as years earlier, prior to the migration to Medina, he threatened to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and in turn the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned him that he in fact would kill him. Ubayy then commented that even if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spat at him he would die because he believed in his promise of killing him with certainty.

Ubayy died shortly after while the non-Muslims were returning to Mecca. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Page 148.

It is strange how Ubayy was so certain in the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regarding his threat yet did not believe in him as a Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. This indicates that deep inside he knew the truth as he knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his whole life, and therefore knew he was no liar.

Muslims must avoid this attitude and instead accept and adhere to the truth at all times.

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

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

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

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

Overlooking and Good Will

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. During this confusion some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, mistakenly martyred another Companion, Al Yamman, may Allah be pleased with him. His son Hudaifa Bin Yamman, may Allah be pleased with him, who was also present at Uhud, witnessed what occurred but never held it against the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and never took the blood money for his father's accidental death which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, offered him and instead he distributed it to the poor Muslims. He kept up this good will until he left this world years later. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 46, in a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 3824 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1148-1149.

A Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Gaining Reward from Allah (SWT)

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. There was a man who was on fighting on the side of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, named Quzman. When his bravery was mentioned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he declared that he would go to Hell. During the battle, he fought fiercely against the non-Muslims and showed great courage. Eventually his wounds disabled him and he was carried off the battle field. He was praised by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but replied that he only fought for the sake of his tribe's honor and social status meaning, he did not fight for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When the pain from his wounds became extreme, he used an arrow to kill himself. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 50.

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.

Help in Distress

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. During this difficult moment Allah, the Exalted, sent tranquility down upon the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, which alleviated their stress and anxiety. Abu Talhah, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who received this blessing. The tranquility came in the form of slumber, which caused him to drop his sword several times while fighting. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 154:

“Then after distress, He sent down serenity in the form of drowsiness overcoming some of you...”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 277.

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted

ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

The Benchmark for Women

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. During this difficulty some female Companions, such as Aisha Bint Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, were also present during the battle and were treating the wounded and providing water to the soldiers. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 279-280.

These pious women played their role in supporting Islam. They did not compare themselves to the men, nor try doing what they did. Instead, they understood that achieving goodness was not about copying what men did, it was simply in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their role and duties.

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, explains an important teaching of Islam namely, the most honourable and best person is the one who possesses the most piety. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“O mankind...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you...”

This is when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has, such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman, namely one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other examples. But the point to note, is that women should not be bothered about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it than they will be superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior. And it is clear from this verse that it is not only restricted to men.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female Muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women. And as a result they became better than the vast majority of men and women. Even if Muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then, it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety this is quite evident when one observes the news and those who behave as they please. And

this reality will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a Muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety, not in arguing and debates.

Facing Difficulties and Hardship

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, safely retreated to Mount Uhud, Abu Sufyan, the non-Muslim leader, called out to them enquiring if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr Siddique and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, had been killed or not. Abu Sufyan understood that the continuation of Islam was hinged on these great personalities. Initially, no one replied to him as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them to remain silent. But when Abu Sufyan began to boast about what occurred, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could not remain silent and rebuked him. Abu Sufyan then told them that his soldiers had mutilated the bodies of the fallen Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though he did not order them to do so, but their actions did not displease him. Abu Sufyan boasted how this battle was revenge for the Battle of Badr, but Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he was mistaken as the non-Muslims who were killed were in Hell whereas the fallen Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were in Paradise. Before leaving, Abu Sufyan challenged the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, to meet the following year at Badr to fight again, which the latter accepted. After the non-Muslim army left, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was dispatched to gather intelligence and assess whether the non-Muslim army was heading home to Mecca or heading to attack Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if they headed for Medina, he would march there and fight them. But after Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, assessed the situation he realized they were heading home to Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 281-282.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Sacrificing it All

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the non-Muslim army left, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, descended to check on their fallen comrades. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told Zaid Bin Thabit to find and ask about the well-being of Sa'd Bin Ar Rabi, may Allah be pleased with them. He eventually found him in amongst the soldiers, in his last breath, covered with over seventy wounds. Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, passed on the greetings of peace from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked about his state. Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, returned the greeting of peace to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and commented that he could smell the scent of Paradise. His final words were a warning message given to the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. He told them that they would have no excuse before Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was harmed while they were still alive. Then he passed away, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 282-283.

Allah, the Exalted, does not expect nor demand such sacrifices from the Muslims of today. Instead, He expects them to make smaller sacrifices in respect to the worldly blessings they possess. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a Muslim likes and loves. For example, Muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless Muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that Muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

Responding to the Call of Faith

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the non-Muslim army left, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, descended to check on their fallen comrades. The Companions could not find the body of Hanzalah Ibn Abu Amir, may Allah be pleased with them, and were told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of his location and the fact that his body had been washed by the Angels. Normally, the body of a martyr is not washed before burial. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them to ask his wife about his situation. After returning to Medina, they asked his wife, who told them that Hanzalah, may Allah be pleased with him, had just married her and been intimidated with her before the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoning the soldiers to the Battle of Uhud. Even though it was obligatory for him to bathe himself yet doing this would have ensured he missed out on joining the soldiers and answering the call straightaway. So he delayed his bath and instead joined the soldiers and marched to Uhud where he was martyred. As a result of his obedience to the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Angels

washed his body before his burial. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 284-285.

Generally speaking, one must respond to the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out.

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no

one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

A Lot for a Little

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the non-Muslim army left, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, descended to check on their fallen comrades. They found Usairim Amr Ibn Thaabit, may Allah be pleased with him, in his last breath. They were surprised to see him as he was one of the few polytheists who lived in Medina that refused to accept Islam. In fact, when he returned from a journey to Medina he found it quiet empty. When he questioned the people there, he was told they had marched to Uhud to fight against the non-Muslims of Mecca. At this point he accepted Islam and headed for Uhud where he fought hard against the non-Muslims until he was fatally wounded. During his last breaths he told the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, he had accepted Islam and then died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed he was from the people of Paradise and commented that he had obtained a lot for a little amount of work. Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, would tell his story and add that he was a man who entered Paradise without performing a single prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad

As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1150-1151.

This is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A

Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

After the Battle of Uhud

Ruling Over Anger

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the non-Muslim army left, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, descended to check on their fallen comrades. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed the mutilated bodies, especially, the body of his uncle, Hamzah Ibn Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, he became angry and commented that he would take revenge by mutilating the non-Muslims the next time they gained victory over them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, made similar comments. Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 126, in connection to this:

“If you retaliate, then let it be equivalent to what you have suffered. But if you patiently endure, it is certainly best for those who are patient.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, retracted his comment and always explicitly forbade every army he dispatched from mutilating enemy soldiers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1160-1161.

The first thing to note is that the reaction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, enhances the fact the he is a human and not some Angelic being. This characteristic has been highlighted many times in the Holy Quran and throughout the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that people can relate to him, as he felt what they feel, he experienced what they experience, such as anger. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 110:

“Say, “I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God...””

A role model which people cannot relate to is not a good role model. He is the perfect role model because he is human and felt what all other humans feel yet controlled himself within the bounds of Islam and noble character.

Secondly, this incident indicates the importance of controlling one's anger.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience. This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themselves in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“...who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.”

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage Muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themselves until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry Muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely, heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry Muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a Muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88 and 89:

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

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one's desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

A Pledge Fulfilled

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the battle was over the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began burying their fallen comrades. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by a martyred Companion, Musab Bin Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, and recited chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 23:

“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 62.

This incident is linked to chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.””

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy

Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

Making Tests Small

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. Many Companions were martyred and their bodies mutilated by the non-Muslims, including Musab Bin Umayr and Hamza Ibn Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with them. Musab Bin Umayr, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed nothing except a woolen cloak. During his burial, when his head was covered with the cloak, his feet were uncovered and when his feet were covered with the woolen cloak, his head was left exposed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded that his head should be covered with the woolen cloak and grass should be used to cover his feet. The same thing occurred with Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 46 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 285.

In addition, during this battle, Hamza Ibn Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, was assassinated. Wahshi Bin Harb was a slave of a non-Muslim, Jubair Bin Mut'im. Jubair promised to free Wahshi if he killed Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, at the Battle of Uhud. During the battle, Wahshi sneaked upon Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, and from a distance threw a spear at him, which pierced his stomach and eventually killed him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 261.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sacrificed their families, homes, businesses and even lives for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

Quranic Knowledge

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After the battle was over the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, began burying their fallen comrades. Due to limited supplies the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would place one piece of clothing over two martyred Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. He ordered that the one who had better knowledge of the Holy Quran should be placed in the grave first. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 56-57 and has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1343.

This incident highlights the importance of understanding and acting on the Holy Quran. In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led

to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Positive Attitude

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. When the army returned to Medina a woman was told that her husband, father and brother had been martyred at Uhud. Her only reply was about the well-being of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When she was told he was alive, she insisted that they take her to him so she could see for herself. When they did this, she commented that all misfortunes were nothing so long as he was safe. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 287.

It is important for Muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse. If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake

of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a Muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds Muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To conclude, a Muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

When Others Depart

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. After observing the sadness of Jabir Bin Abdullah, whose father had been martyred during the Battle of Uhud, may Allah be pleased with them, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cheered him up by telling him that Allah, the Exalted, only ever spoke to a person from behind a screen, whereas He spoke to his father face to face. Allah, the Exalted, asked his father to request anything from Him. Abdullah, his father, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he desired to return to the world and fight in His path and be killed again. Allah, the Exalted, then reminded him that He had already decreed that none shall return to Earth after their death. Allah, the Exalted, instead revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 169, informing the people of his father's state and the state of the other martyrs:

“And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allāh as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.”

This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 61.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the importance of dealing positively with the loss of people.

Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

Times of Grief

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina he heard the women lamenting for their fallen relatives. He became sad as there was no one mourning for his uncle, Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, who was martyred during the battle. One must bear in mind that according to Ibn Mas'ud, he and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, never witnessed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, weep so much as he did when he saw the mutilated body of Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. These women were then told by their male relatives to lament for Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for them but replied that he did not desire this and concluded that he did not like wailing. He forbade wailing after this. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Pages 66-67 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 285.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. They are severe warnings against those who

act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Causing Divisions

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. The hypocrites unsuccessfully attempted to take advantage of the grieving Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by emotionally cutting them off from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Jewish scholars and hypocrites claimed that if Islam was true then they would not have been defeated. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

“Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves [even] after the truth has become clear to them. So pardon and overlook until Allāh delivers His command. Indeed, Allāh is over all things competent.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 67 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 2:109, Page 7.

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

In addition, it is clear that all Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were tested with different hardships and trials. In fact, according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they were tested the most out of all of mankind. Therefore, Muslims should understand that actualising belief in Islam does not guarantee protection from difficulties. It in fact guarantees a safe journey through the difficulties and a mighty reward in both worlds. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.”

Obedience in Difficulties

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina, they became aware that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were considering marching back towards Medina in order to wipe out Islam for good. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave orders for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, despite their grievous wounds and tired bodies, to move out in pursuit of the non-Muslims. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, responded positively Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 172:

“Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 67-68.

A man named Ma'bad Ibn Abu Ma'bad met the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his army and offered his condolences and services. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to reach the non-Muslim army and dissuade them from attacking Medina. He eventually reached the non-Muslim army and warned them not to attack Medina as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had gathered a formidable army who were prepared to fight to the bitter end. Through this Allah, the Exalted, cast fear into the hearts of the non-Muslims who decided to head back to Mecca, even though their primary goals of killing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and securing their trade route past Medina, failed. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 151:

"We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve for what they have associated with Allāh of which He had not sent down [any] authority. And their refuge will be the Fire, and wretched is the residence of the wrongdoers."

Abu Sufyan, the non-Muslim leader, sent a message through a trading caravan to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that the non-Muslim army had rallied more support and were ready to finish off the Muslims. He hoped this false information would put-off the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from pursuing them. His plan failed, as they did pursue them but the non-

Muslims slipped out of their reach. In this context, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 173-174:

“Those to whom people said, “Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.” But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, “Sufficient for us is Allāh, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.” So they returned with favor from Allāh and bounty, no harm having touched them. And they pursued the pleasure of Allāh, and Allāh is the possessor of great bounty.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 288-291 and in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 3:151, Page 42.

The positive response from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even at a time of stress and difficulty, indicates their great zeal for the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

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

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

Wisdoms from the Battle of Uhud

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-30.

It is clear that the main reason why the Muslims suffered so many losses was the misjudgment of the archers. They unintentionally disobeyed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they believed the war was over and his command no longer applied. This indicates that as long as a Muslim sincerely obeys the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will be granted success but if they disobey him, this support will be withdrawn. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah...”

and chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.””

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 63:

“Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another. Already Allāh knows those of you who slip away, concealed by others. So let those beware who dissent from his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] order, lest disaster strike them or a painful punishment.”

In addition, it is customary for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to sometimes gain the upper hand over their enemies and on some occasions their enemies gain the upper hand, even though the ultimate victory is always in favour of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The reason for this alternating of circumstances is to separate the true believers from the hypocrites and the opportunists, who always join the successful group in order to reap worldly benefits. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, always won, then the hypocrites and opportunists would become inextinguishable from the sincere believers. If the Holy

Prophets, peace be upon them, always lost, then this would hinder their mission. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 140:

“If a wound should touch you - there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allāh may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs...”

Another reason for this alternating of victory and defeat is to teach the believers how to adopt both patience and gratitude. If they lost all the time, then they may well become patient but would find it difficult to be grateful. If they won all the time, then they may well adopt gratitude but will struggle to adopt real patience. The alternating of situations allows for them to adopt both patience and gratitude, two halves which are vital to obtain success in both worlds.

Showing Mercy

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never admonished or censured the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who committed the mistake during the Battle of Uhud. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not even criticize the hypocrites for abandoning the army at such a

critical time. This would have only infuriated them thereby pushing them further away from Islam. He instead continued showing them respect and kindness hoping they would take this act of mercy positively thereby sincerely repenting and accepting Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1203-1204.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy.

The verse quoted earlier clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Two Tongues

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. Many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were martyred and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, retreated from Uhud with his followers before the battle had begun. Before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would give his Friday sermon, Abdullah Bin Ubayy would rise and declare that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was amongst them and that Allah, the Exalted, gave them honor and glory through him. He would then command the people of Medina to support, listen and obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the Battle of Uhud and before the Friday sermon, he rose to give his usual insincere speech but this time he was manhandled by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who told him to sit down and be quiet as he was no longer worthy of addressing the people in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 71-72.

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

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

Abdullah Bin Ubayy then left the Mosque angrily and met some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, at its gate. When he informed them of what occurred, they advised him to seek forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and ask the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to seek forgiveness on his behalf also. He arrogantly turned away from their sincere advice. Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 5-6, in connection to this:

“And when it is said to them, “Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you,” they turn their heads aside and you see them evading while they are arrogant. It is all the same for them whether you ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; never will Allah forgive them. Indeed, Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 9, Pages 653-654.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom’s worth of pride in their heart will not enter

Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a Muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

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

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

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah,

the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

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

Search for Piety

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Uthman Bin Affan married Umm Kulthum, may Allah be pleased with them, the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, following the death of his previous wife Umm Kulthum's sister Ruqayya, may Allah be pleased with them. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was the only man to marry two daughters, one after the other, of a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 82.

After the marriage, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned his daughter about Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, she referred to him as the best of husbands. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 54-55.

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 110, it was Allah, the Exalted, Who commanded for Uthman to marry Umm Kulthoom, may Allah be pleased with them.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only permitted these marriages as Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was a pious man.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and

difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a Muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Stern on Faith

Sometime after the Battle of Uhud, some senior non-Muslims from Mecca, including Abu Sufyan and Ikrimah Ibn Abu Jahl, visited the leader of the hypocrites Abdullah Bin Ubayy. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, extended protection to them while they visited Medina, perhaps hoping their hearts would soften towards Islam during their stay. During their visit, they approached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and told him not to criticize their idols and instead declare that their idols possessed the power to intercede in the court of Allah, the Exalted, and in return they would leave him alone. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, to escort them out of Medina. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 1:

“O Prophet, fear Allāh and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 33:1, Pages 127-128.

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

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

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

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

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

lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

The 4th Year After Migration

Facing Hardship with Steadfastness

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the external threats to Medina increased significantly after the losses the Muslims faced at the Battle of Uhud. The various non-Muslim tribes believed what happened at Uhud weakened the Muslims and they were no longer the powerful force which gained victory at the Battle of Badr. Many of these tribes took this as an opportunity to fight against the Muslims in order to conquer Medina. For example, the Banu Asad tribe mustered fighters to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, preempted their attack by dispatching a Muslim army of 150 fighters to the non-Muslim's homeland and neutralized their mission, dispersed their fighters and obtained some spoils of war. Another non-Muslim tribe gathered some fighters to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched a force against them who managed to kill their leader and defeat their band of fighters. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 296-297.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, faced each difficulty and attack with patience and steadfastness.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend themselves would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves 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.

Proof of Love

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a tribe living outside Medina claimed to have accepted Islam and requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to send some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to their tribe in order to teach them more about Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but they were betrayed. Some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were martyred, others were captured and turned over to the non-Muslims of Mecca as prisoners. When one of these prisoners, Zayd Bin Al-Dathina, may Allah be pleased with him, was being executed, he was asked whether he would prefer to swap places with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He swore an oath that he would not like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to be even pricked by a thorn if it meant he escaped execution. A non-Muslim leader, Abu Suyfan, commented that he had never witnessed a group of people love someone more than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, loved the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 86-88.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him

as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to

follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

A True Believer

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a tribe living outside Medina claimed to have accepted Islam and requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to send some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to their tribe in order to teach them more about Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but they were betrayed. Khubayb Bin Adi, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who were captured and sold to a non-Muslim of Mecca, who desired to execute him in retaliation of the killing of his relative, who Khubayb, may Allah be pleased with him, killed during the Battle of Badr. Khubayb, may Allah be pleased with him, requested a razor to clean himself on the day he was executed. A female slave sent her small son with the razor to Khubayb, may Allah be pleased with him, who was chained up in their house,. She then realized she made a mistake and feared Khubayb, may Allah be pleased with him, might kill the child in an act of revenge for his execution. She found the child sitting in his lap and he then handed the child over to her and commented that he would never harm a child. On that day, while being taken to his execution he requested to offer two cycles of prayer, which he was permitted to do. They tortured him hoping he would renounce Islam, but he remained firm. Eventually, he was executed and crucified by the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 86-88 and in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 1, Pages 509-510.

Even in such a difficult situation Khubayb, may Allah be pleased with him, maintained his good manners towards the non-Muslims.

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

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

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

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

Overlooking and Forgiving

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan, commented that they should send someone to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Bedouin who overheard his comment secretly held a meeting with him where he agreed to carry out this evil plan for a fee. The Bedouin set out to Medina and found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in his Mosque with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the man intended treachery but Allah, the Exalted, would foil his plan. When he drew close to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Usayd Bin Hudayr, may Allah be pleased with him, pulled the man away and while doing so found a dagger on him. The Bedouin was subdued but before anyone could harm him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned him about his plan. When he informed him of his plan the Bedouin was handed over to Usayd, may Allah be pleased with him, as a prisoner with the instruction not to kill him. The next day the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spoke to the Bedouin and gave him the option of being released unharmed or for him to accept Islam. The man accepted Islam. He commented that he recognized the truthfulness of Islam, when he first entered Medina. When he first observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he lost all his strength, something that never happened to him before. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, perceived his treachery even before he did anything. These things convinced him of the truthfulness of Islam. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 92-93.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as

taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Firmness in Difficulties

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a non-Muslim, Abu Bara Amir Bin Malik, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Medina. He did not accept Islam nor show enmity towards it. He suggested that some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, should be dispatched to his area in Najd to invite the people towards Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was hesitant as he suspected they would attack his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Abu Bara guaranteed their security. Around seventy learned Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were dispatched but they were attacked by another tribe in Najd, the Banu Sulaim. They were all martyred except one who was carried away wounded. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 299-301 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1234-1235.

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

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

The Banu Nadir

Breaking Pledges

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 11:

“O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allāh upon you when a people determined to extend their hands [in aggression] against you, but He withheld their hands from you; and fear Allāh. And upon Allāh let the believers rely.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 5:11, Page 67.

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

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

True Justice

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have taken revenge immediately against this non-Muslim tribe who broke their pledge and plotted to assassinate him but instead he adhered to justice and gave them an opportunity to leave peacefully.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.¹ So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Evil Support

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought, they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory, they would leave with them. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 11:

“Have you not considered those who practice hypocrisy, saying to their brothers [associates] who have disbelieved among the People of the Scripture, “If you are expelled, we will surely leave with you, and we will not obey, in regard to you, anyone - ever; and if you are fought, we will surely aid you.” But Allāh testifies that they are liars.”

This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 302-303.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

Therefore, a Muslim should assess whether those in their life direct them towards Allah, the Exalted, or not. If they do then it is a clear sign of their

love for them. If they do not then it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Forgoing Revenge

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought, they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory, they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, besieged the Banu Nadir, the latter requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to spare their blood and instead grant them safe passage so they could evacuate the area with their belongings. Instead of taking revenge against the Banu Nadir for their evil plan, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed them to take whatever they could carry except weapons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as

taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

No Compulsion in Faith

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. As a result, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged and defeated them but exiled them instead of killing them for their many acts of treason. Before the coming of Islam, when a polytheist woman from Medina would lose her children at a young age, she would make a vow to raise her next child as a Jew, hoping this would prevent the child's death. As a result these children were raised amongst the Banu Nadir tribe and were therefore expelled with the rest of the tribe. When their biological parents, who had now become Muslims, desired to keep their children in Medina and impose Islam on them, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in ṭāghūt [false objects of worship] and believes in Allāh has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101 and in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, Number 2682.

Islam is something which must be accepted by a person's heart not just through their words and actions. As the affair of a person's heart is hidden forcing them to accept Islam becomes a pointless endeavor. This clearly refutes those who claim Islam spread by the sword. Allah, the Exalted, has repeatedly condemned and harshly criticized those who accept Islam with their tongues but reject it in their hearts meaning, hypocrites. This would be the outcome of the one who is forced to accept Islam. Allah, the Exalted, would never be satisfied with this code of conduct as open disbelief is preferred over hypocrisy. This is obvious as the lowest level in Hell has been reserved for the hypocrites. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 145:

“Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire...”

In addition, the Holy Quran makes it clear that the people of the book (Jews and Christians) living in an Islamic state can live in peace and with full rights even if they do not accept Islam by paying a tax. If Muslims were allowed to force others to accept Islam there is no need to prescribe this tax. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 29:

“Fight against those who do not believe in Allāh or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allāh and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah [tax]...”

Extreme Generosity

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. As a result, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged and defeated them but exiled them instead of killing them for their many acts of treason.

The spoils of war were gained without any fighting and was therefore handed over to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He gathered the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and offered them a choice of equally sharing in the spoils with the Companions from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, or allowing the Companions from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, to take all of it thereby allowing them to no longer need the financial assistance of the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, such as living with them. The Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, replied that he should distribute all the spoils to the Companions from Mecca, may Allah be with them, and they would continue aiding them financially as well. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1269-1270.

This is connected to chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a Muslim likes and loves. For example, Muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless Muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that Muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

Blind Imitation

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. As a result, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged and defeated them but exiled them instead of killing them for their many acts of treason. After their exile, a Jewish scholar named Amr Bin Su'da, who belonged to the Banu Qurayza tribe living close to Medina, passed by the abandoned homes that belonged to the Banu Nadir. After witnessing this, he returned to his tribe, the Banu Qurayza, and assembled their leaders. He openly admitted that this occurred because they disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, by not accepting and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Each of their leaders admitted that the signs found in their divine scriptures clearly indicated the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran. They even mentioned some senior Jewish scholars, who had passed away before the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and how they urged their people to accept and follow him, before they died. One of these leaders commented that the only thing which prevented him, and by extension his followers, from accepting Islam was the other leader, as he did not feel comfortable to oppose him and added that if that leader accepted Islam, so would he and his followers. But out of fear of losing their prestige and worldly benefits and blind imitation of one another they failed to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101 and 108-109.

Blind imitation of others is a major reason why people reject the truth. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

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.

Prohibition of Alcohol

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, prohibited alcohol. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1281.

Abrogation is the process by which one command or prohibition after some time is replaced by another command or prohibition.

Allah, the Exalted, employed this technique in order to make the transition from a non-Muslim to a strong Muslim easier for a person. If all the final commands and prohibitions were put into full affect in one go this process becomes difficult. This is the reason why alcohol was not forbidden immediately in Islam, as giving it up in one instant would have been difficult for most people who drank it. Instead it was prohibited in stages. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."..."

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 43:

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying...”

And finally chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

This process is also adopted by medical doctors who do not prescribe the full doses of medicines straight way and instead build up the dose over time so that they patients adapt to them in a positive way. This strategy was in fact a great blessing and mercy from Allah, the Exalted, as countless people who accepted Islam would have rejected it if all the final commands and prohibitions were revealed in one go at the beginning of revelation. As indicated by the final part of this verse even though Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly has the authority to do this yet He chose the path of ease and mercy for the people.

In addition, the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect

people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

This process of abrogation is in fact an aspect of the protection and help of Allah, the Exalted, so that one can succeed in both worlds with ease.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a Muslim must never consume alcohol as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the Muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies, which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person namely, their body, mind and soul. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. Yet, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises Muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed from ten different ways in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. These include the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who deals with something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

Prohibition of Gambling

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, prohibited gambling. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1281.

The fact that gambling has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in the following verse highlights how important it is to avoid. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, *Adab Al Mufrad*, number 1262, that a Muslim should donate charity as compensation for saying to another that they should make a bet. If talking about placing a bet has a penalty can one imagine the seriousness of actually gambling?

Gambling not only destroys a person but all those associated with them such as their family. It is associated with many other sins and conditions, such as alcoholism and depression.

A person might win some wealth through gambling but in the long run they will only ever be a loser.

Sincerity to the Holy Quran

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left for an expedition called Dhat Al Riqqa. When they stopped at a valley overnight, he ordered two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to stand guard at the mouth of the valley while the army slept. One of these Companions, Abbad Bin Bishr, may Allah be pleased with him, took the first shift while the second Companion, Ammar Bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, slept. Abbad Bin Bishr, may Allah be pleased with him, began to pray. During his prayer a non-Muslim enemy soldier spotted him and struck him with an arrow. Abbad Bin Bishr, may Allah be pleased with him, removed the arrow from his body and continued praying. This occurred four times before he woke up Ammar Bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him. The non-Muslim soldier fled when he realized that there were two guards. Ammar Bin Yasir, may Allah be pleased with him, enquired why Abbad Bin Bishr, may Allah be pleased with him, did not wake him up when he was struck with the first arrow. He replied that he did not want to stop reciting the Holy Quran until he finished his prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 115-116.

Muslims are not expected to behave in this manner but they are expected to show true sincerity to the Holy Quran.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran. This includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one

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

Beautiful Character

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left for an expedition called Dhat Al Riqqa. While returning from this expedition, the weak camel of Jabir Bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, was lagging behind the rest of the army. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, noticed this, he told him to dismount from the camel. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then prodded the camel a few times with a stick and told him to mount again. The camel then became strong and fast. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked him to sell him the camel. Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, offered to give it to him as a gift but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused and a price was agreed. As Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, recently married, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, held a wedding feast for him. When they returned to Medina, Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, brought the camel which he agreed to sell to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, saw the camel, he gave it Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, as a gift and gave him the money they agreed to in the sale and some extra. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 117-118.

This was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, towards others.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

Increase or Loss

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, married Zaynab Bint Khuzayma, may Allah be pleased with her. She was known as the “mother of the poor” for her continuous generous charitable donations and for her kindness and compassion towards the poor and needy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 112.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2336, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every day two Angels supplicate to Allah, the Exalted. The first asks Allah, the Exalted, to compensate the one who spends for His sake. The second asks Allah, the Exalted, to destroy the one who withholds.

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but it also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their family as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

“...But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it...”

A Muslim should remember a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to Paradise, close to people and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and expend their blessings in the correct way as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication against their blessing by the Angel maybe accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Ease with Difficulty

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, married Umm Salama, may Allah be pleased with her. She was first married to a Companion, Abu Salama, may Allah be pleased with him, but he was severely wounded at the Battle of Uhud and sometime after he died. After his death she followed the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by acknowledging that all things belong to Allah, the Exalted, and to Him they will all return, and by supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, to compensate her for the loss of her husband and to give her something better in exchange. She did wonder how she could find someone finer than Abu Salama, may Allah be pleased with him, but Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled her supplication and so she accepted a marriage proposal from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 123-124 and has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2126.

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

"We [i.e., Allah] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham."

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

The Second Badr

Before leaving the Battle of Uhud, the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan, announced an appointment for the two armies to meet again at Badr the following year. When the time came the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, marched with around 1500 soldiers and camped at Badr, waiting for the non-Muslims. The non-Muslim army consisted of around 2000 soldiers but set up camp away from Badr. Allah, the Exalted, cast terror into their hearts and even though he set the appointment himself, Abu Sufyan, encouraged the soldiers to head back to Mecca. As they were frightened to engage the Muslims, they did not show any opposition to him and returned to Mecca. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained in Badr and engaged in some profitable trade. After eight days, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Badr with awe and superiority which had spread into the hearts of the Arab people. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 306-307.

Because of their firmness, Allah, the Exalted, granted the Muslims a psychological victory which echoed across Arabia more than a military victory would have.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny

with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves 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.

Losing Loved Ones

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the six year old son of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, who was also the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 55.

A few years later, Umm Kulthoom, the wife of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, and the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if he had another single daughter, he would have wed her also to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 56.

In another Hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that if he had forty daughters, he would marry them to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, one after the other, until none of them remained. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 163.

Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during

this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

The 5th Year After Migration

Good Will to Leaders

After the non-Muslims failed to show up to Badr and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, he set off again with an army heading towards Daumatul Jandal. This land was on the border of the Roman empire and it was therefore a long journey. The enemy at Daumatul Jandal were attacking trading caravans belonging to the Muslims and those who had peace treaties with the Muslims. Word also reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were planning on moving towards Medina also. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wanted to send a clear message to all of Arabia, and by extension the Roman empire, that the Muslim lands were protected and out of their control. When the army reached Daumatul Jandal, the enemy army fled out of fear and no fighting took place. After some time the Muslim army returned safely to Medina. During his absence from Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Sibaa, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of Medina. The interesting thing is that Sibaa, may Allah be pleased with him, was not a native of Medina and originally belonged to the Ghaffar tribe. Appointing a foreigner to authority was a test for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who could have objected to him during the long absence of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they did not. When they accepted Islam, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, put aside their tribal affiliations and were all joined together by faith therefore they showed loyalty to their leader irrespective of his background. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1300-1305.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

The Battle of Ahzab

A True Leader

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 128.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice

before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themselves and prohibited evil yet acted on it themselves will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

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

Effort Leads to Reward

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 128.

This incident is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The

excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

Weakness in Striving

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. Some of the hypocrites held back from physically taking part and complained of weakness. Some of them without permission secretly left the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, while they dug the trench. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verses 62-64:

“The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and, when they are [meeting] with him for a matter of common interest, do not depart until they have asked his permission...Allah certainly knows those of you who slip away, hiding behind others....And Allah is Knowing of all things.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 128-129.

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

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

The Real Life

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. Once the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came out to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, during a cold morning and witnessed their hunger and extreme fatigue while digging the trench. He supplicated for Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and added that the real life is the life of the hereafter. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 129 and has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4099.

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.

Gratitude with Patience

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. While digging the trench the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would chant supplications and couplets in order to encourage the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One of those included the following couplet: "In Allah's name and through Him we were guided and if we had worshipped any but Him we would have suffered. What a fine Lord! What a fine religion!" This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 130-131.

This incident highlights a negative trait of the soul. It 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 observe 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.

Outcome of Tests

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. While digging the trench the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of a patch of extremely hard ground which they could not break. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came and struck the hard ground with a spade and it turned into soft sand. They also witnessed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, tied a stone to his stomach in order to hold back the pangs of hunger as they all had not eaten in three days because of a lack of resources. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 131 and has also been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4101.

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for Muslims. Whereas, the tests which the

righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day Muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many Muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, Muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid Muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”

Concern for Others

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. While digging the trench the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of a patch of extremely hard ground which they could not break. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came and struck the hard ground with a spade and it turned into soft sand. They also witnessed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, tied a stone to his stomach in order to hold back the pangs of hunger as they all had not eaten in three days because of a lack of resources. One of the Companions, Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, requested permission to return home and asked his wife to cook some food for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After cooking enough for a few people, he invited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He informed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the little food available but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, still invited the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were present in the hundreds and miraculously the food became enough for all present. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages

131-132 and has also been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4101.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have accepted the invitation for himself but he, as always, remained sincere to all people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One of Us

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. During the digging, the Emigrants from Mecca, the Muhajireen, and the Helpers from Medina, the Ansar, may Allah be pleased with them all, began arguing over Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him. Each side claimed that he belonged to them even though he was neither a resident of Medina or a emigrant from Mecca, he instead came from Persia. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ended the debate by declaring that Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, was a member of his household. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 135.

This honor was bestowed on Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, because of his piety, as he was in no way connected to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through blood. In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam,

peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one’s race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

Strong Faith

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. During the digging some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, came across a strong white rock which they could not break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to it, he struck it three times with a pickaxe. Each time he struck it a huge flash of light could be seen similar to a great lantern on a very dark night. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that each time he struck the rock he was shown three great regions that were ruled by dominant empires at that time and he was given glad tidings that his nation would overcome all of them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, praised Allah, the Exalted, and became extremely pleased with these glad tidings. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 135.

It is important to note that this occurred at an extremely difficult time for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased them. They were digging a huge trench

with minimal provisions and expecting a huge enemy attack. Even with these difficulties the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, accepted the word of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their faith was extremely strong.

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 Hudaibiya. 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...”

Corrupt Hearts

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. During the digging some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, came across a strong white rock which they could not break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to it, he struck it three times with a pickaxe. Each time he struck it a huge flash of light could be seen similar to a great lantern on a very dark night. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that each time he struck the rock he was shown three great regions that were ruled by dominant empires at that time and he was given glad tidings that his nation would overcome all of them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, praised Allah, the Exalted, and became extremely pleased with these glad tidings. On the other hand, those with harsh and corrupt hearts namely, the hypocrites, mockingly declared that how could the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, claim that these great empires will be defeated by his nation even though the poor Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were digging a trench and could not even move out into the open out of fear of an enemy attack. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 12:

“And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease said, “Allah and His Messenger did not promise us except delusion.””

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 135.

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

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and

striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

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

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

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

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

It is important for Muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

Choosing Friends Wisely

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 135.

Prior to the battle commencing, a Companion, Ubadah Bin Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, had allies from among the Jews and suggested that he should bring them along for the battle in order to scare the enemy. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 28:

“Let not believers take disbelievers as allies [i.e., supporters or protectors] rather than believers. And whoever [of you] does that has nothing [i.e., no association] with Allāh, except when taking precaution against them in prudence. And Allāh warns you of Himself, and to Allāh is the [final] destination.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 3:28, Page 32.

This verse does not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as this particular verse refers to the non-Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Becoming intimately friendly to a non-Muslim who desired the destruction of Islam was especially dangerous at that time as the non-Muslims would spy on the Muslim community in order to gain vital intelligence which could aid them in their fight against Islam.

Generally speaking, the Holy Quran clearly advises that Allah, the Exalted, does not forbid befriending non-Muslims. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 8:

“Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.”

This is further supported by the main verse under discussion as a person only takes precautions against someone they fear will harm them. This was the behaviour of most of the non-Muslims during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In reality, the main verse warns Muslims not to befriend those who direct them away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in reality can apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. As warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, a Muslim is on the religion of their friend. This means a person will adopt the characteristics, good or bad, which their companions possess.

In addition, treating all people kindly, Muslims and non-Muslims, is the characteristic of a true Muslim and true believer. A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, advises that a true Muslim is the one who keeps other people, including non-Muslims, safe from their evil speech and actions. And a true believer does not harm people or their possessions through their speech or actions. So this verse warns Muslims to accompany the pious as they will direct them towards the mercy and obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between healthy social conduct with others and deep friendship with others. Deep friendship can lead one to compromising on their faith out of love for their companion whereas, good social conduct with others will never take one to this level. Therefore, Muslims must adopt good character and manners towards everyone but reserve deep friendship for those who will encourage them towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This, only a Muslim can do for another Muslim. A non-Muslim on other hand, will either directly or indirectly encourage a Muslim to disobey Allah, the Exalted, even if they do not intend this. This is because a non-Muslim lives by a separate code of

conduct than a Muslim. And the behaviour which is acceptable to a non-Muslim may not be acceptable in the eyes of Islam. This unacceptable behaviour will become normalized in the eyes of Muslims if they accompany such people. When something becomes normalized in one's eyes then doing it becomes easier.

An Evil Friend

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench, they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A soldier travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Initially, Ka'b Bin Asad, did not desire to break his pledge as he declared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing but trustworthy and truthful. But the non-Muslim kept urging Ka'b until he eventually gave into the evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 139-140.

Muslims should note that a major sign of true love is when one directs their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Fulfilling Trusts

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Initially, Ka'b Bin Asad, did not desire to break his pledge as he declared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing but trustworthy and truthful. But the non-Muslim kept urging Ka'b until he eventually gave into the evil plan. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 139-140.

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

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

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

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

Being Suspicious

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Initially, Ka'b Bin Asad, did not desire to break his pledge as he declared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing but trustworthy and truthful. But the non-Muslim kept urging Ka'b until he eventually gave into the evil plan. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. When news of this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he dispatched some of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to meet with the Banu Qurayza and determine whether the news was true or not. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 140-141.

It is important for Muslims to avoid a particular negative mentality which is mentioned in chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

Unfortunately, adopting this negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. First of all, interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins, such as backbiting and slandering. In all cases, a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice. And it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits, such as bitterness. It is important for Muslims to accept any good advice they are given even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them. They should strive to interpret things, where possible, in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality.

Steadfast in All Conditions

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Initially, Ka'b Bin Asad, did not desire to break his pledge as he declared that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was nothing but trustworthy and truthful. But the non-Muslim kept urging Ka'b until he eventually gave into the evil plan. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The hypocrites feared for their lives and desired to abandon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so they requested him to grant them permission to return to their homes so that they could protect them. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 13:

“And when a faction of them said, “O people of Yathrib, there is no stability for you [here], so return [home].” And a party of them asked permission of the Prophet, saying, “Indeed, our houses are exposed [i.e., unprotected],” while they were not exposed. They did not intend except to flee.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 141-142.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

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

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

Concern for the People

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to break up the non-Muslim army by offering a tribe accompanying the non-Muslim army compensation for retreating and returning to their homes. When he sought counsel from his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they enquired if this desire was a command from Allah, the Exalted, or his own choice. He replied that it was his own choice as he was witnessing how the many different tribes of Arabia descended on Medina and he was desperate to help his Companions,

may Allah be pleased with them, any way he could. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 142.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This encouragement will also inspire a Muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

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

Steadfast Obedience

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to break up the non-Muslim army by offering a tribe accompanying the non-Muslim army compensation for retreating and returning to their homes. When he sought counsel from his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, they enquired if this desire was a command from Allah, the Exalted, or his own choice. He replied that it was his own choice as he was witnessing how the many different tribes of

Arabia descended on Medina and he desired to help his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, any way he could. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, replied that before Islam, the non-Muslim army would never have dared to attack Medina and now that Allah, the Exalted, honored them with Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would never compromise on the truth, even if it led to war. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 142.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Conducting Good Business

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. Apart from a few skirmishes no real fighting took place because of the trench that was dug by the Muslims. A small force of non-Muslims managed to cross a narrow part of the trench and were blocked by the Muslims. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had a duel with a senior noblemen from the non-Muslims of Mecca, Amr Bin Abd Wudd, and killed him. The non-Muslims offered a large sum of money, between 10,000 to 12,000 silver coins for his body. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that they did not

profit from the dead and that there was no good in his corpse nor the money offered for it. His body was handed over to the non-Muslims for free. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 142-145.

Even in such dire circumstances the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not fail to conduct business in the appropriate manner.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Evil Plans Fail

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 142-145.

During this time the Banu Qurayza, dispatched many loads of camels carrying food to the non-Muslim army. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, found out about this and dispatched a group of Muslim soldiers who attacked and seized this caravan before it reached the non-Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 1368.

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

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

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

Courage and Steadfastness

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 142-145.

The Banu Qurayza dispatched a spy to investigate whether the women and children were being guarded in the forts the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace

and blessings be upon him, placed them in. The auntie of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Safiyyah Bint Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with her, observed the spy, exited the fort and killed him with a stick. When the news reached the Banu Qurayza that their spy had been killed, they assumed the Muslim men were guarding the forts and they therefore did not attack them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1401-1402.

Generally speaking, this reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

A Betrayal Mindset

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. A man, Na'im Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, was part of the non-Muslim army but had secretly accepted Islam. He made his way to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and declared his Islam and offered his services. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to do anything that would benefit the Muslims. Na'im, may Allah be pleased with him, visited the Banu Qurayza tribe and warned them not to aid the non-Muslims as they were not resolved on fighting the Muslims as they

were not convinced they could win. If the non-Muslims abandoned their plan then the Banu Qurayza would undoubtedly be punished by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for violating their peace treaty. He told the Banu Qurayza to only aid the non-Muslims if they were willing to hand over some of their elite people who would stay with them in their forts, thereby sharing the same fate the Banu Qurayza would face. This would force the non-Muslims to fight the Muslims in order to protect their elite. Na'im, may Allah be pleased with him, then went to the non-Muslims and told them that the Banu Qurayza regretted breaking their peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and have allied with him again. And as a token of their sincerity, they would entice some of the elite from the non-Muslims to come to them and hand them over to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for execution. Na'im, may Allah be pleased with him, warned the non-Muslims not to send any of their men to the Banu Qurayza otherwise they would be betrayed. When the leaders of the non-Muslim army sent a message to the Banu Qurayza telling them to attack the Muslims, they replied that they will attack the Muslims after some of the leaders of the non-Muslims came to them in order to ensure the non-Muslims would complete their plan of fighting and destroying the Muslim army. Based on Na'im's advice, may Allah be pleased with him, the non-Muslims refused to do this. This caused the Banu Qurayza to panic as the warning given by Na'im, may Allah be pleased with him, seemed to be true. This mistrust and dissension amongst these non-Muslims prevented the Banu Qurayza from attacking the Muslims from within Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 142 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 318-319.

The non-Muslims quickly mistrusted each other as they themselves were people who betrayed others often. They fulfilled the famous saying "no honor amongst thieves".

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

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

Difficulties and Ease

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, witnessed this fear and anxiety, he encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by declaring that Allah, the Exalted, would certainly give them relief after this distress. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 148.

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his

people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

An Exit

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout this battle and eventually Allah, the Exalted, dispatched a fierce wind towards the non-Muslim army which completely uprooted their camp and caused them to sink into confusion and distress. The non-Muslims decided to return home as the weather was against them and they failed to successfully penetrate the trench and enter Medina. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 154-155.

Before the non-Muslim army left, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Hudaifa Bin Yamman, may Allah be pleased with him, to gather intel from the enemy camp but warned him not to do anything which could attract attention to himself. When he reached the enemy camp he observed the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan. Hudaifa, may Allah be pleased with him, loaded his bow and was about to fire at Abu Sufyan but withheld his hand when he remembered the orders he was given. He secretly attended one of the meetings of the non-Muslims and ascertained that they had decided to leave and head back to their homes as they were running out of supplies, the wind sent by Allah, the Exalted, was wreaking havoc on them and they could not penetrate the trench dug by the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1383-1384.

An important lesson to learn from this event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one's control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

The Banu Qurayza

Facing Consequences

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. Eventually Allah, the Exalted, dispatched a fierce wind towards the non-Muslim army which completely uprooted their camp and caused them to sink into confusion and distress. The non-Muslims decided to return home as the weather was against them and they failed to

successfully penetrate the trench and enter Medina. The next morning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left the trench with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and returned home, laying their weapons down. While wearing battle armor, the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and told him Allah, the Exalted, had commanded him to move against Banu Qurayza. Allah, the Exalted, also revealed chapter 33, verses 25-27:

“And Allah repelled those who disbelieved, in their rage, not having obtained any good...And He brought down those who supported them among the People of the Scripture from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts [so that] a party you killed, and you took captive a party... And ever is Allah, over all things, competent.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 158.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Making Sound Judgements

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, not to offer the afternoon Asr prayer until they reached the forts of Banu Qurayza. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not pray until they reached Banu Qurayza, while others prayed on the way, out of fear of missing the prayer entirely. They assumed that the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only applied if they reached Banu Qurayza on time. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of the two decisions, he did not criticize either. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 158-159.

Whenever a scholar masters the different sciences of Islam they may reach a level called independent reasoning. This allows them to apply the teachings of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with their professional unbiased judgement in order to derive a ruling within Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when this scholar makes an incorrect

ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

But the important thing to note is that a Muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, will end up in Hell if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a Muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

The Best People

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts, so they requested a Companion, Abu Lubaba, may Allah be pleased with him, for some advice as they were not in a position to fight the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Abu Lubaba, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated to them that if they surrendered their male soldiers would most likely be executed for their treason, a standard punishment even in this day and age. Abu Lubaba, may Allah be pleased with him, felt great regret at what he indicated as he believed he betrayed Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. So he chained himself to a tree in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, until he was forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if he had come to him, he would have sought forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, on his behalf but as he decided the matter himself, he would leave the matter to Allah, the Exalted. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 27:

“O you who have believed, do not betray Allāh and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 102:

“And [there are] others who have acknowledged their sins. They had mixed [i.e., polluted] a righteous deed with another that was bad. Perhaps Allah will turn to them in forgiveness. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 162-164 and in Imam Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 8:27, Pages 82-83.

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

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm

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

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

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

Refusing the Truth

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. One of the leaders of the Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, who was the main person responsible for their act of treason, then warned his tribe to accept and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as all the signs mentioned in their divine scriptures of the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, were found in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But his people stubbornly rejected this advice and claimed that they would not abandon the laws of the Torah, even though they never adhered to them correctly in the first place. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 163.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in

all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Adhere to the Truth

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. One of the members of Banu Qurayza, Amr Bin Su'da, left their fortress and passed by the Companion, Muhammad Bin Maslama, may Allah be pleased with him, who was on guard duty. As Amr Bin Su'da refused to commit treason by breaking his pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Companion, Muhammad Bin Maslama, may Allah be pleased with him, allowed him to leave. Amr Bin Su'da spend the night in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and departed Medina in the morning. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, heard about this incident he commented that Allah, the Exalted, saved Amr Bin Su'da because of his trustworthiness meaning, he adhered to the truth and refused to commit treason. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 164-165.

It is important for Muslims to adhere to the truth in all aspects of their lives if they desire the protection and blessings of Allah, the Exalted. In a Hadith

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to

disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Fearing the Critics

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement. On the way, some of the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, who had been old allies of the Banu Qurayza, urged Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, to be lenient with them. Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, simply replied that in the path of Allah, the Exalted, he will not be afraid of the criticism of the critics. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 164-165.

A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the

Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if it comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

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

Refusing to Compromise on Faith

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement. On the way, some of the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, who had been old allies of the Banu Qurayza urged Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, to be lenient with them. Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, simply replied that in the path of Allah, the Exalted, he will not be afraid of the criticism of the critics. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 164-165.

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

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

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

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

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

remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

This incident also indicates the perfection of the faith of Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim's faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others

financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them

as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Treason

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement and he decided that the soldiers of Banu Qurayza would be executed and their assets seized. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then declared that he had given judgement according to the ruling of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 166.

It is important to bear in mind the capital punishment for treason is a very standard judgement, even in this day and age. In addition, their crime was not against a single person but an entire city full of people. If they were exiled instead they would have only waged war with Medina again.

Allah, the Exalted, takes revenge on those who oppress His weak servants as they do not possess the power to defend nor avenge themselves.

A Muslim who understands this divine name will not oppress the servants of Allah, the Exalted, especially those who appear defenceless as in reality their Protector and Avenger is Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will take revenge for His servants during their lives on Earth and especially on Judgement Day. He will establish justice by forcing the oppressor to hand over their righteous deeds to their victim and if necessary, the victim's sins will be shifted to their oppressor. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by taking revenge against their own inner Devil which inspires them towards evil by subjecting it to the strict obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And a Muslim must seek revenge on all things which prevent them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by turning away from them.

Blind Loyalty and Imitation

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement and he decided that the soldiers of Banu Qurayza would be executed and their assets seized. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then declared that he had given judgement according to the ruling of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 166.

Thabit Bin Qays, may Allah be pleased with him, desired to repay a non-Muslim from the Banu Qurayza, Zubayr Bin Bata, who was sentenced to execution, as he had spared his life on an earlier occasion. Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, requested for his release from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter accepted. When Zubayr was informed, he commented that without his family, life would

be meaningless. Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, then got his family released also. Zubayr, then commented that without property, life would not be good for them. Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, then got all his property and wealth released to him. Zubayr then began asking about the noblemen of Banu Qurayza one by one, and each time he was told that they had been executed. He then commented that life without them was meaningless and desired to join them. He was then executed by Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 170-171.

The man showed a strange level of blind loyalty and imitation, as it was clear that his people were in the wrong for first betraying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and secondly rejecting him.

Blind imitation of one's forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth, such as Judgement Day. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

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.

Pleasing People

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement and he decided that the soldiers of Banu Qurayza would be executed and their assets seized. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then declared that he had given judgement according to the ruling of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 166.

When the chief of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, was brought forward for execution, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reminded him of the advice given by one of their senior Jewish scholars, Ibn Khuraash, who had passed away prior to the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ibn Khuraash, ordered his people, including Ka'b Bin Asad, to follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, when he declared Prophethood and to convey his greetings to him. Ka'b admitted this truth and even though he was fully convinced of the truthfulness of Islam, as he told his people to accept and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during the siege of Banu Qurayza, he still rejected Islam, as he was afraid the other Jews would mock him for accepting Islam, just to save himself from execution. He was then executed. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1415-1416.

Even though he was convinced of the truthfulness of Islam, yet his desire to please people was so strong that he rejected it. This desire to please people must be avoided as it can lead one to disobeying Allah, the Exalted.

People often complain that no matter how hard they try they cannot seem to please everyone. No matter what situation they are in someone always seems to be displeased with them. This is a reality which all experience whether it is in their family life, work life or with friends. A Muslim should always remember a few simple things which would prevent them from stressing over this issue.

Firstly, the majority of people are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, even though He granted them countless blessings without being asked to. How then can these people be truly happy with another person who in reality gave them nothing? Their lack of pleasure with Allah, the Exalted, is quite evident from their complaining and the lack of gratitude they show Him.

Secondly, no matter how much a person improves their character they will never reach the sublime character possessed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they were still disliked by some people. If this is the case with them how can a normal person achieve the pleasure of everybody during their life?

A Muslim should also remember that as people were created with different mind-sets they will always find people who disagree with their attitude and behaviour. Because of this there will always be some people who are not pleased with a person at any given point in time. The only one who can come close to pleasing everyone is the two-faced person who changes their attitude and beliefs depending on who they are dealing with. But eventually even this person will be publicly disgraced by Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, obtaining the pleasure of all people is unattainable and only a foolish person will strive to achieve something which cannot be obtained. A Muslim should therefore strive to prioritise the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, above all else by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean a Muslim should not be respectful to others as this contradicts the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It means a Muslim should understand that if they obey Allah, the Exalted, He will protect them from the negative attitude and effects of people even if this protection is not obvious to them. But if they prioritise pleasing people they will not

achieve it and Allah, the Exalted, will not protect them from the displeasure and negative effects of people.

Garden or Pit

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he besieged the Banu Qurayza after their act of treason. After deciding the punishment for the treason committed by Banu Qurayza, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, died from the wounds he sustained during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the throne of Allah, the Exalted, shook at the death of Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6346. During his burial the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that 70,000 Angels descended from the Heavens for his burial, that Angels carried his bier and that his grave momentarily constrained him until Allah, the Exalted, relieved him of it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 175-177.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their

deeds. If a Muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, Muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

Punishment for Treason - 2

After the Battle of Khandaq and dealing with the betrayal of Bany Qurayza, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed to the execution of Sallam Bin Abu Huqayq, who persisted in breaking his pact of peace with the head of state, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He continued to incite the non-Muslims of Mecca, Medina and surrounding areas against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and was one of the main people behind the Battle of Khandaq. Sallam was staying at Khaybar and so a small group of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, secretly entered his home and killed him. Sallam's wife gave away their intention, when she began to scream and as a result they raised their swords to kill her but remembered the strict orders of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to not harm any woman or child, so they refrained their hands. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 186-187.

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Evil Motives

After the execution of Sallam Bin Abu Huqayq, a prominent non-Muslim who was staying in Khaybar, the non-Muslims of Khaybar decided to take revenge for him. They began to mobilize an army to attack Medina and even tried to encourage foreign non-Muslim tribes to help them. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, heard of this he dispatched thirty Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to encourage their leader, Yusair Ibn Razaam, to return to Medina to hold talks with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Yusair agreed but insisted that he and 29 of his soldiers should ride back to Medina with the 30 Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. On the way back Yusair betrayed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and a fight broke out. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, managed to kill all of them, except one non-Muslim who fled on foot. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1485-1486.

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

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

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Marries Zaynab Bint Jahsh (RA)

Abandoning Baseless Customs

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he married Zaynab Bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her. Many verses were revealed in connection to this marriage, such as chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verses 37-39:

“And when you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] said to the one on whom Allah bestowed favor and you bestowed favor, "Keep your wife and fear Allah," while you concealed within yourself that which Allah is to disclose. And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you fear Him. So when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We married her to you in order that there not be upon the believers any discomfort [i.e., guilt] concerning the wives of their claimed [i.e., adopted] sons when they no longer have need of them. And ever is the command [i.e., decree] of Allah accomplished. There is not to be upon the Prophet any discomfort concerning that which Allah has imposed upon him. [This is] the established way of Allah with those [prophets] who have passed on before. And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed. [Allah praises] those who convey the messages of Allah and fear Him and do not fear anyone but Allah. And sufficient is Allah as Accountant.”

These verses discuss when the adopted son of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Zayd Ibn Harithah, may Allah be pleased with him, divorced his wife, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was aware this would occur and that Allah, the Exalted, would then marry Zaynab, may Allah be pleased with her, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was apprehensive of this as he knew the people before the coming of Islam disapproved of this type of marriage, even though one's adopted son is not their biological son. The apprehension he felt was only out of sincerity to others as he did not desire to create any doubts about Islam in their hearts. It was this thought that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, initially concealed. If he feared people over the commands of Allah, the Exalted, he would have never announced Prophethood in the first place. Allah, the Exalted, willed to eradicate this incorrect notion within the society through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and did not will this event to occur in order to make things harder for him. This has been indicated in the verses under discussion.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should never fear the criticism of society in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as this can lead to them compromising on their faith for the sake of worldly gain.

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

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

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

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

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

remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Visiting Others

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he married Zaynab Bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her. A feast was held in honour of the marriage and guests were invited to the home of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But some guests lingered and continued conversing with each other after they had finished their meal. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not desire to ask them to leave so he left and went for a walk. After this Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 53:

“O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted for a meal, without awaiting its readiness. But when you are invited, then enter; and when you have eaten, disperse without seeking to remain for conversation. Indeed, that [behavior] was troubling the Prophet, and he is shy of [dismissing] you. But Allah is not shy of the truth...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 199-200 and has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5163.

It is important for a Muslim to fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting others according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain their reward.

They should not stay long thereby causing trouble to the host and their relatives. In this day and age it is easy to contact the host and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many Muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

The 6th Year After Migration

Showing Mercy and Kindness

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a small group of soldiers to deal with an external threat. They dispersed the enemy soldiers and brought back a staunch disbeliever, Thumamah Bin Uthal, who had been charged by Musaylima, the liar, to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Thumamah was tied to a pole in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, where he was questioned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After some time passed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered for his release. Thumamah went away and washed himself and then returned and accepted Islam. He witnessed the noble behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, inside the Mosque and the city of Medina, which urged him to accept Islam. He then left for Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra) and informed the non-Muslims of Mecca of his conversion to Islam. As he was a chief of his tribe, he swore he would not allow the non-Muslims of Mecca to gain a single grain from Yamamah, which was one of the areas they travelled for trading. This boycott continued until the non-Muslims of Mecca requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to intercede on their behalf and because of his intercession, Thumamah, may Allah be pleased with him, lifted the boycott. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 326.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Bond of Faith

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. This resulted in the Companion from Mecca calling for support from the other Companions from Mecca and the Companion from Medina calling for support from the other Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. When some of them responded to this call, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned them against this type of tribal behaviour and they quickly ended the matter without any further issues. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1314-1315.

This indicates the importance of connecting people with the bond of faith and not anything else, as this alone leads to real unity.

With the passing of time people often become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even

collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Causing Disunity

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 213.

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

cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in reality, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

Two Tongues of Fire

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. A child, Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, overheard his evil words and reported them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was summoned but took huge oaths that he never spoke those words. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took no further action. In this connection Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 7-8:

"They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allāh until they disband." And to Allāh belong the depositories of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say, "If we return to al-Madīnah, the more honored [for power] will surely expel therefrom the more humble." And to Allāh belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know."

After these verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, comforted Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, by taking his ear and commenting that this was the one who devoted his ear to Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 213-215.

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

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

Envy and Hatred

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. A child, Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, overheard his evil words and reported them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was summoned but took huge oaths that he never spoke those words. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dismissed him without taking any further actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, later mentioned this incident to a man who knew Abdullah Bin Ubayy well. The man, Usayd Bin Hudayr, may Allah be pleased with him, told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to go easy on Abdullah Bin Ubayy as the people of Medina were preparing to make Abdullah Bin Ubayy their king before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated there. So Abdullah Bin Ubayy always believed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took his kingdom away from him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 214.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person in reality it is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious Muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Making Faith Excellent

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. A child, Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, overheard his evil words and reported them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was summoned but took huge oaths that he never spoke those words. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dismissed him without taking any further actions. The events which occurred spread quickly across the army and they began talking about it. As a result, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the army to begin marching forward at an usual time and made them march all night and throughout the morning of the next day. When they eventually setup camp, the soldiers were so tired that they all fell asleep. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 214 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1315-1316.

By making the soldiers march all night, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, preoccupied them from further discussing what

had occurred, as this would have led to nothing good. This indicates the importance of avoiding harmful and useless things.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as they occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Good Treatment

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, strived hard in order to create discord and problems for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Once his son, Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who was a loyal Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and offered to kill his hypocrite father for his evil acts of treason against the city of Medina and its leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would instead forgive and treat his father, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, kindly. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 215.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit

sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Obedience to the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, strived hard in order to create discord and problems for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Once his son, Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who was a loyal Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and offered to kill his hypocrite father for his evil acts of treason against the city of Medina and its leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would instead forgive and treat his father, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, kindly. Even though Abdullah Bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, did not kill his hypocrite father, he did set the record straight by showing everyone that the honorable one was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his hypocrite father was the ignoble one. On one occasion, while entering Medina, Abdullah Bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, prevented his father from entering Medina until the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave him verbal permission to enter it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 215 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1318-1319.

Abdullah Bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, clearly showed that obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, takes priority over the obedience to the entire creation.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “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.

Benefit Yourself

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, strived hard in order to create discord and problems for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Once his son, Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who was a loyal Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and offered to kill his hypocrite father for his evil acts of treason against the city of Medina and its leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would instead forgive and treat his father, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, kindly. After the people of Medina heard this they would often criticize Abdullah Bin Ubayy whenever he behaved in an evil way. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, heard of this, he commented to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who had suggested to execute Abdullah Bin Ubayy for treason, that if he gave the order to execute him before, some people would have stood up for him whereas now, if he gave the order for his execution, the people would not hesitate in carrying it out. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 215.

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will

be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Marries Juwairiyah Bint Haarith (RA)

Spreading Goodness

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. The expedition led to the capture of many spoils of war and prisoners of war. These prisoners of war were distributed between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Juwairiyah Bint Haarith Bin Abu Diraar, was the daughter of the leader of the Banu Al Mustaliq and was also captured and handed over to one of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. She agreed to purchase her freedom from him and sought help from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, admired her character and offered to purchase her freedom and marry her. When she agreed and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, heard about this they felt shy holding onto the prisoners of war who were now related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and as a result they freed all of them. When her father, the leader of the Banu Al Mustaliq, found out what had occurred he entered Medina and accepted Islam, as did all his tribe. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1310-1311.

The wise foresight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, can be appreciated in this incident. He knew marriage to the tribal leader's daughter would soften the hearts of her tribe and incline them towards Islam. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, choice of freeing their prisoners of war augmented this strategy and as a result the entire tribe was freed and accepted Islam. Spreading goodness and peace in this way is the sign of a true Muslim.

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

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

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this

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

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

Slander of Aisha (RA) - Wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

A Manifest Slander

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relieve herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 217-218.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone behind their back in a way which would be displeasing to them even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then on Judgment day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a Muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a Muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

Thinking Positively

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 217-218.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well

about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

Good Conduct

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. On returning to Medina, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, became quite sick and remained at home. No one informed her of the slander that was spreading across Medina, which by now had reached her entire family. The only thing she noticed was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, seemed more emotionally distant from her but still, as always, maintained his excellent behaviour towards her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 218.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A Muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A Muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Comforting Others

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. On returning to Medina, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, became quite sick and remained at home. After she found out about the slander she came to her mother and questioned why she hid the slander from her. Her mother comforted her and advised her not to take the slander seriously, as people always speak badly about those who have been blessed like she had. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 219.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spreading Gossip

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did address the people and publicly questioned why people were gossiping and spreading slander about his family and the Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased with them all. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 219.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip whether it is true or not and it leads to problems between people, fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil as he always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a Muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance...”

A Muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the Holy Quran a Muslim should not harbour any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

This same verse teaches Muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A Muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent.

Mind Your Business

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. One of the people who took part in spreading this slander was Hamna, the sister of the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her. Hamna took part, as she believed that this slander would cause the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to love her sister more than Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. She did this even though her sister, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her, always said nothing except good things about Aisha, may Allah be pleased her. This has

been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 219.

First of all it is important to note that a Muslim should understand that they can never truly help another person through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Whatever worldly benefit one achieves for themselves and others will eventually become a curse for them in both worlds. A Muslim should only aid people in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a Muslim should understand the importance of minding their business. Firstly, a person who fails to adopt this attitude will be deprived of their precious time. Everything can be bought except more time. Wasting time will be a great regret for a person in the hereafter when they observe the reward of those who utilized their time correctly. Even though, some things uttered by a person who does not mind their business is not sinful it is obvious they have lost out on using their time in a more productive way. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a person cannot perfect their Islam until they stay away from things which do not concern them.

The definition of speaking about something that does not concern a person is if a person chose to remain silent from this type of speech they will not be sinful nor cause any harm by their silence.

In reality, a person should not even speak about things which concern them unless it is at an appropriate time and place. Ignoring this advice only leads to trouble for the speaker and others.

Asking questions about things which do not concern one is a common problem found in society today. People often enquire about these sort of things and force others who desire to keep things private to either lie, avoid answering directly through trickery or they ignore them which comes across rude. A Muslim should be more considerate and only enquire about general things which do concern them.

Those who dedicate their speech to things which do not concern them will be deprived of speaking about things which do concern them. And those who truly direct their efforts on things which concern them will not find time to speak about things which do not concern them. The latter are the successful who utilized their tongue in the correct way.

If one truly reflected on all the arguments they have had they will realise the majority of them was caused by someone speaking about something which did not concern them. Imagine how many arguments could be avoided just by avoiding this attitude?

Corrupting Unity

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did address the people and publicly questioned why people were gossiping and spreading slander about his family and the Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased with them all. After this address the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, became enraged when witnessing the distress this slander caused the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But as the hypocrites were concealing their disbelief and enmity, it was difficult to identify them and so this stress caused even some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to

argue with each other over who was responsible for this slander. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 219.

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

Sharing Problems

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. When the effects of the slander intensified in Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called for his two close Companions, Ali Ibn Abu Talib and Usama Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with them, and consulted with them. They both spoke well about Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and even found further proof of her fine character by calling upon a witness, a slave girl, who worked within the house of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She also spoke nothing except good about Aisha, may Allah be pleased with

her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 219-220.

Muslims should strive to avoid adopting a certain attitude namely, sharing their problems with too many people. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

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

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

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person

would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only share their problems with those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

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

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

Controlling Anger

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. When the effects of the slander intensified in Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and kindly reminded her that Allah, the Exalted, forgives whoever sincerely repents to Him. As soon as Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, heard these words she immediately stopped crying. She waited for her parents to defend her in the presence of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but out of love and respect for him, they remained silent. She then directly responded to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by declaring that

she would never admit doing something she did not do and her only option was to remain patient just like the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, remained patient when he experienced the loss of his son the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 220.

It is important to note that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not accuse her of anything wrong, in fact he publicly defended her, but he needed to fulfil his role as a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, by reminding her of seeking repentance if she needed to. In addition, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, could have easily become enraged at those around her, as she felt she did not have their full support. But she instead controlled her anger and remained patient.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience. This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themselves in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“...who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.”

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage Muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themselves until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry Muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely, heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry Muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a Muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88 and 89:

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

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one's desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

Patience Leads to Reward

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. When the effects of the slander intensified in Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came to Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and kindly reminded her that Allah, the Exalted, forgives whoever sincerely repents to Him. As soon as Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, heard these words she immediately stopped crying. She waited for her parents to defend her in the presence of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but out of love and respect for him, they remained silent. She then directly responded to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by declaring that

she would never admit doing something she did not do and her only option was to remain patient just like the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, remained patient when he experienced the loss of his son the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even had a chance to get up from his seat, Allah, the Exalted, revealed the verses which exonerated and greatly honored Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and harshly criticized those who began and took part in the slander against her. Chapter 24 An Nur, verses 11-26:

“Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather, it is good for you...Those [good people] are declared innocent of what they [i.e., slanderers] say. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 220.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

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

unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let Things Go

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha Bin Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retraced her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp, she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army, people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. After Allah, the Exalted, exonerated Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, of this slander, her father, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, declared that he would no longer financially aid his relative who took part in spreading this slander. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22, encouraging him and all Muslims to forgive and overlook the mistakes of others:

“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

After this, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, retracted his declaration and continued helping his relative. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3180.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships

with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement.

Feeling For Others

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force under the leadership of Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him. This army encountered severe difficulties as they ran out of provision. As a result, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, gathered the food of the army and distributed it equally amongst the soldiers, which at one point was one date fruit each per day. They were even forced to eat leaves of plants in order to nourish themselves. Qais Bin Sa'd Bin Ubaadah, may Allah be pleased with him, even began to slaughter his camels in order to feed the army. The army eventually came across a whale which had washed ashore on the coastline. They ate from it for a month and after finishing their mission they returned to Medina, where they shared some of the whale's meat with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1452-1454 and in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4357.

This incident indicates the deep care each of the soldiers had for one another.

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

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

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

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

The Pact of Hudaibiya

The Real Pilgrimage

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. Their decision was based on a dream seen by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of him and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, performing the Visitation (Umra). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 223 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the Visitation (Umra) is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of

their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

Hindering Good

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 223-224 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This

is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

Staying Neutral

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. He then commented that the non-Muslims of Mecca were infatuated with war and that they would come to no harm if they simply left him alone. If other non-Muslims killed him, the non-Muslims of Mecca would gain what they desired and if he was granted victory then the non-Muslims could enter Islam and join in the success. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 223-224, it has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 1492.

Generally speaking, this indicates that if one cannot aid someone in what is good then the least they can do is not hinder it.

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it

will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

Pressing Forward

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consulted the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that as they were not intending to fight with the non-Muslims of Mecca, they should proceed towards Mecca and if they were prevented from entering it then they would fight in self-defense. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then gave the order to proceed forward. This has been discussed in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732, and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq, Pages 125-126.

This event teaches Muslims that whenever they encounter a difficult situation they should remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, trusting that He will provide them a way out of it even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

A Muslim should understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the best for His servants even if the wisdoms behind the difficulty are not obvious. It is a person's reaction which either leads to blessings or the anger of Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to reflect on the countless examples in their own life where they believed something was bad only to change their mind later on and vice versa. This is just like when a person takes a bitter medicine prescribed to them by a doctor. Even though the medicine is bitter they still take it believing it will benefit them. It is strange how a Muslim can trust a doctor whose knowledge is limited and who is not absolutely certain the bitter medicine will benefit them and fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge is infinite and when He only decrees the best for His servants.

A Muslim should understand the difference between wishful thinking and trust in Allah, the Exalted. The person who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, and then expects Him to help them in difficulties is a wishful thinker. The one who will gain the help of Allah, the Exalted, which is indicated in this great event, is the one who sincerely strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience and then trusts His judgment without complaining or questioning His choice.

Importance of the Prayer

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. During this journey, the Muslims prayed while the non-Muslim army observed them from a distance. After the prayer was over, the non-Muslims criticized each other for not attacking the Muslims while they prayed. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102, which discusses the fear prayer.

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms. Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage so they could come down upon you in one [single] attack. But there is no blame upon you, if you are troubled by rain or are ill, for putting down your arms, but take precaution. Indeed, Allāh has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 4:102, Page 62.

One must note, that even in such a dangerous situation Allah, the Exalted, did not cancel the obligatory prayer, He only modified it.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], “What put you into Saqar?” They will say, “We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the

obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse

thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number

676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Experiencing Difficulties

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 224 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a Muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This

is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A Muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A Muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Accepting Good Things

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. Eventually, when they reached close to Hudaibiya, the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sat down and refused to go any further. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, understood that staying within this area was best for them instead of marching forward towards Mecca. He commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to setup camp in Hudaibiya and declared that he would accept anything the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca requested from him that day as long as it did not contradict the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 224 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in

all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Tested for Piety

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. Eventually, when they reached close to Hudaibiya, the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sat down and refused to go any further. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, understood that staying within this area was best for them instead of marching forward towards Mecca. He commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to setup camp in Hudaibiya and declared that he would accept anything the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca requested from him that day as long as it did not contradict the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 224 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

Before the treaty of Hudaibiya was signed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca should desist from their evil activities before Allah, the Exalted, dispatched the one who would strike their necks in support of Islam and whose heart Allah, the Exalted, had tested for piety. When he was

questioned about who he was referring to, he indicated Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 173.

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

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

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such

as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

United in Faith

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the group to take an alternate road into Mecca which was rough and extremely dangerous. Eventually, when they reached close to Hudaibiya, the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sat down and refused to go any further. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, understood that staying within this area was best for them instead of marching forward towards Mecca. He commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to setup camp in Hudaibiya and declared that he would accept anything the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca requested from him that day as long as it did not contradict the commands of Allah, the Exalted. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them that he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. One of these men sent by the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca was Urwa Bin Mas'ud. After witnessing the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and how much they varied in respect to tribe, ethnicity and social class he declared that if the non-Muslims of Mecca decided to attack them, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would flee. Urwa believed that the only people who would stay and fight with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would be the people from his own tribe. He and many

others believed this as tribal affiliation meant everything to them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 226 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

With the passing of time people become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Showing True Love

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. One of these men sent by the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca was Urwa Bin Mas'ud. Urwa observed the great love the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After returning to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca he declared that whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would perform ablution his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would compete for the water he used. If he spat the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would prevent it from falling on the ground. And they would compete for his hair if it fell from him. He concluded that he had visited and observed the King of Persia, Chosroe, the Roman King, Caesar and even the Ethiopian King, Negus, but he had never seen the devotion and love the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had for their leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 226-227 and has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732.

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

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Being Flexible

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, treated each ambassador according to their mentality, without compromising on the teachings of Islam, in order to show them his intention and to convince them that Islam would eventually prevail over the non-Muslims of Mecca. Each of these ambassadors returned to the non-Muslims of Mecca warning them not to prevent the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from entering Mecca, nor provoke him to fight. For example, Hulais, who was one of the leaders of the Abyssinians, was dispatched by the non-Muslims of Mecca to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knew that Hulais was a man devoted to the rituals of that time, especially the rituals of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the Visitation (Umra), so he ordered the sacrificial animals to be driven out in front of him and told the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to chant the intention of performing the Visitation (Umra) loudly. When Hulais observed this, his extreme devotion to the rituals of the Arabs seized him and he returned to the non-Muslims of Mecca even before meeting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

demanding that they allow him entry into Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 226-227, it has been recorded in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731-2732 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1507-1508.

This adaptive behaviour shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is vital to adopt as becoming stubborn in one's behaviour only leads to many disputes and problems.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Goodwill

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched 40 to 50 men who encircled the camp of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to capture a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him. But this force was captured by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and were presented as prisoners to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead of punishing them he forgave them and set them all free. In this regard Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 24:

“And it is He who withheld their hands from you and your hands from them within [the area of] Makkah after He caused you to overcome them. And ever is Allāh, of what you do, Seeing.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Avoiding Behaving Hastily

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Kharash Ibn Umayyah, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslims of Mecca in order to convince them of his intention. When Kharash, may Allah be pleased with him, entered Mecca, the non-Muslims immediately attacked him and killed his camel and were about to kill him when Hulais, the ambassador of the non-Muslims of Mecca who was sent to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, earlier, and his tribesmen intervened. Kharash, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but the latter did not behave hastily against their treachery of trying to kill an ambassador, something which was widely seen as forbidden, and instead desired to dispatch another ambassador. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1509-1510.

Acting hastily would have resulted in the deaths of many people, something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, avoided by remaining patient.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect,

one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Being Sincere to Leaders

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then desired to dispatch Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslims of Mecca in order to avoid confrontation and make his peaceful intention clear. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him to send Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, instead, as the non-Muslims were angry with him because of his very harsh attitude towards them since he became Muslim. In addition, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, would easily gain protection from the noblemen of Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted his recommendation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have accepted this important role as the ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, which would have clearly indicated his superiority. But out of loyalty and sincerity to his leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he recommended someone more suitable for the role.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Adhere to the Straight Path

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message, he was granted permission to circumambulate the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba but he replied that he could never do that before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did so. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

This is an important characteristic to adopt meaning, adhering strictly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of doing things beyond these two sources of guidance.

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.

The Pledge of Ridwan

Pledge of Servanthood

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message, he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in this day and age. During the

pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed one of his hands into the other and commented that his hand represented the hand of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and his pledge of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed numerous verses, such as chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 10:

“Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward.”

And chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 18:

“Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 227-228 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4066.

It is important for humanity to fulfill the pledge they made with Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

“And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware."”

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person's heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while

fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

“We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...”

Verifying News

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in this day and age. After this pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received news that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was in fact alive and he eventually returned to their camp. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 228.

A great problem society is facing in this age is the spread of fake news within society. One can imagine how difficult this is to control especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for Muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many Muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting Muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between Muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A Muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent Muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

True Love and Sincerity

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote up this peace treaty. The non-Muslims objected to writing down the title of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the Messenger of Allah, the Exalted, peace and blessings be upon him, and insisted they only write his name down. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, to erase his title from the document and only write his name but out of sincerity and love he could not do it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then erased his title with his own hands so that the treaty would be made.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Pages 173-174.

One must follow in the footsteps of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, by adopting sincerity for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

“Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Remaining Firm when in Doubt

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Bin Khattab like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, was not pleased with these conditions, as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and the latter reminded him to remain firm on the obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the same exact reply to Umar as Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, did. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

This incident reminds Muslims to always remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even in situations which are unclear to them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Showing Softness

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Bin Khattab like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, was not pleased with these conditions, as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and the latter reminded him to remain firm on the obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the same exact reply to Umar as Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, did. This has been

discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

It is important to note that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have become angry at Umar's questions, may Allah be pleased with him, yet he remained calm and showed softness towards him. This is the way one must act with others, especially the seniors towards the youngsters and the leaders towards their subordinates .

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Greatness is in Difficulties

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that if any person who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina, he or she would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca, they would not be sent back to Medina. When the pact was agreed to, a Companion, Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, who had been imprisoned in Mecca managed to escape and reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But as the pact was agreed, Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, had to be returned to Mecca and could not go to Medina with the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Witnessing this greatly distressed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, to be patient and control himself. He promised that Allah, the Exalted, would provide relief and succor for him and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, stuck in Mecca. This

has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 229-230.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will realize the majority of the events discussed, such as this one, involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Fulfill All Promises

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that if any person who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina, he or she would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca, they would not be sent back to Medina. When the pact was agreed to, a Companion, Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, who had been imprisoned in Mecca managed to escape and reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But as the pact was agreed, Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, had to be returned to Mecca and could not go to Medina with the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Witnessing this greatly distressed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Abu Jandal, may Allah be pleased with him, to be patient and control himself. He promised that Allah, the Exalted, would provide relief and succor for him and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, stuck in Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, concluded that

he had made a peace pact with the non-Muslims of Mecca which he could not betray. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 229-230.

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

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

Seeking Advice

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. This caused the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to become extremely sad and upset. After the pact was signed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to fulfill the aspects of their Visitation (Umra) which included sacrificing their animals and shaving their hair. At first, none of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, responded as they were all sunken in grief and sadness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to his camp and sought advice from his wife, Umm Salama, may Allah be pleased with her. She advised him to silently fulfill the aspects of his Visitation (Umra) and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would undoubtedly follow him when they witnessed this. He did what she advised and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did respond positively and showed no signs

of impatience or disobedience. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 239.

Muslims should avoid consulting many people about their affairs and problems. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

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

“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person

would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical health a Muslim should only share their problems with those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

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

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

A Clear Victory

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact, whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its advent, around 18 years. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

This superiority and success was granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they remained sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions

of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Evil Plots Fail

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. One of which was that if any person who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina, he or she would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca, they would not be sent back to Medina. It was obvious the non-Muslims of Mecca only demanded this as they believed it would weaken the Muslim nation by breaking their unity. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina. A Companion, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped his imprisonment in Mecca and fled to Medina. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched two men to retrieve Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, from Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, honored the agreement and handed him over to be returned to Mecca. On his way back to Mecca, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped and eventually fled to another secluded area away from

Medina and Mecca. After this occurred, whenever a Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, fled their imprisonment in Mecca, they joined up with Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him. Their numbers grew till eventually they began raiding and looting the merchant caravans of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, as the pact of peace did not include them, only the citizens of Medina were included. This caused severe financial problems for the people of Mecca. They eventually send a message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pleading for him to call Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, and his force to Medina so that the raids and looting would end. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed and these men migrated to Medina peacefully. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 240.

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

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

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

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

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

Simple and Gentle Speech

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he concentrated his efforts on spreading the call of Islam, especially after the constant threat of the non-Muslims of Mecca had been paused because of the Pact of Hudaibiya. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched some messengers who hand delivered his letters to prominent figures, such as the vicegerent of Egypt, Chosroes, the Persian emperor and Heraclius, the Roman king. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 350.

When studying these letters two highly important techniques are indicated. The first is the simple and straight forward speech used by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the other is gentle speech.

It is important when spreading the word of Islam to avoid unnecessary complicated terms and flowery speech. This challenges the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who confirmed, in a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 1167, that he was gifted with comprehensive speech. This means his words were to the point but contained an ocean's worth of knowledge. Similar to this attitude is when people purposely discuss less significant issues which can cause divisions in society. Some adopt this method in order to stand out from others but this

is a misguided attitude as the duty of a Muslim who spreads the word of Islam is to discuss more significant issues with the aim to strengthen society.

In addition, the beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

“...And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers...”

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

“And said, "I am your most exalted lord.””

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

Consequences of Evil

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he concentrated his efforts on spreading the call of Islam, especially after the constant threat of the non-Muslims of Mecca had been paused because of the Pact of Hudaibiya. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched some messengers who hand delivered his letters to prominent figures, such as the vicegerent of Egypt, Chosroes, the Persian emperor and Heraclius, the Roman king. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 350.

The letter sent to Chosroes, the Persian emperor, was first sent to his deputy, the king of Bahrain. The arrogance of Chosroes seized him and he tore up the letter sent by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and commanded his governor of Yemen, Bazan, to send men to arrest the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and bring him to the palace of Chosroes. When these men reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he informed them that their emperor, Chosroes, had been killed by his own son. He told them to warn their new emperor that Islam would prevail everywhere and outstrip the Persian empire. These men returned to the governor of Yemen, Bazan, and informed him of what occurred. Shortly after, the new Chosroes, Sherweh, sent a letter to Bazan confirming what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him. The new Chosroes ordered Bazan to leave the Muslim community alone. After this, Bazan and the Persians of Yemen accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 355.

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

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

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

The 7th Year After Migration

The Battle of Khaybar

Gaining the Love of Allah (SWT)

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts, he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, healed the infected eye of Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, with his blessed saliva and then entrusted him with the banner and as a result some of the forts of Khaybar were then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

It is important for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of Ali Bin Abu Talib and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they too become a beloved of 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 a Muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body

becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins....”

The pious Muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This Muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a Muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

Guiding Others

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner. He was commanded to ride close to their fort and call them towards Islam before fighting them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then advised that if a single person accepted guidance through him that would be better than the most expensive and treasured herd of camels known to the Arabs. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

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

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

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

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

Effects of Intention

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. A hypocrite was fighting fiercely against the non-Muslims during this battle but when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of his outward bravery he commented that the man would go to Hell. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, then observed that the man was injured during the battle and ultimately killed himself, which is prohibited in Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 258.

One of the main reasons why people who do good things, such as buying gifts for others, do not receive the same level of respect and love from people than some who do not do these things is because of their intention. When these people perform righteous deeds in respect to people, such as visiting the sick, they do so either for the sake of people meaning, to please them or they mix this intention by also aiming to please Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the one who acts for the sake of people will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. They will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Scholars are divided on whether those who mix their intention by aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, and people will receive a partial reward or none at all. In order to be on the safe side a wise Muslim should only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the other people who gain more respect and love from others do so because they solely act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When they treat others kindly they do not do it for the sake of people. Because of their sincerity Allah, the Exalted, places more love and respect in the hearts of the people compared to those who do more acts of kindness to people but are less sincere in their deeds.

So if people desire reward from Allah, the Exalted, and respect from people they should correct their intention and only perform righteous deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. One sign of this correct intention is that this person will aim to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people. Meaning, they do not pay attention to the attitude and reactions of people.

What You Give is What You Get

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. During this time a Bedouin accepted Islam and took part in the battle. During the battle he was assigned some spoils of war by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but he refused to accept it. He declared that his purpose in taking part in this battle was to achieve Paradise through martyrdom. He even pointed to his throat showing that he desired an arrow to hit him there. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him that if he fulfilled his contract with Allah, the Exalted, then Allah, the Exalted, will fulfill His contract with him. Later on while fighting, the man was shot in the throat and was martyred. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed he replied that the man fulfilled his contract with Allah, the Exalted, and so Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled His contract with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 259-260.

This incident is connected to chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

This verse means that if one aids Islam then Allah, the Exalted, will help them in both worlds. It is strange how countless people desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet do not fulfil the first part of this verse through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The excuse most people give is that they do not have time to perform righteous deeds. They desire the help of Allah, the Exalted, yet will not make time to do the things which please Him. Does this make sense? Those who do not fulfil the obligatory duties and then expect the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need are quite foolish. And those who do fulfil the obligatory duties yet refuse to go beyond them will find that the aid they receive is limited. How one behaves is how they are treated. The more time and energy dedicated to Allah, the Exalted, the more support they will receive. It really is that simple.

A Muslim needs to understand that the majority of the obligatory duties, such as the five daily prayers, only takes a small amount of time in one's day. A Muslim cannot expect to barely dedicate an hour a day to offering the obligatory prayers and then neglect Allah, the Exalted, for the rest of the day and still expect His continuous support through all difficulties. A person would dislike a friend who treated them in such a manner. How then can one treat Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, like this then?

Some only dedicate extra time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, when they encounter a worldly problem then demand Him to fix it as if they done Allah, the Exalted, a favour by performing voluntary good deeds. This foolish mentality clearly contradicts servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is amazing

how this type of person finds time to do all their other leisurely activities, such as spending time with family and friends, watching TV and attending social functions yet finds no time to dedicate to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. They cannot seem to find time to recite and adopt the teachings of the Holy Quran. They do not seem to find time to study and act on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people somehow find wealth to spend on their unnecessary luxuries yet seem to find no wealth to donate in voluntary charity.

It is important to understand that a Muslim will be treated according to how they behave. Meaning, if a Muslim dedicates extra time to please Allah, the Exalted, then they will find the support they need to journey through all difficulties safely. But if they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties or only fulfil them without dedicating any other time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, then they will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. Put simply, the more one gives the more they shall receive. If one does not give much they should not expect much in return.

Avoiding Betrayal

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. During this expedition a slave who was herding sheep for his owner accepted Islam. When he asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, what to do with the sheep, he commanded him to return the sheep back to the owner by herding them towards a road that led to the owner's property. This slave was later martyred during this expedition and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed Paradise for him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1590-1591.

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

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

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

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

Hold Onto Justice

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. The non-Muslims of Khaybar took refuge in one of their forts and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took control of their farmlands. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to expel them from his territory they struck a deal with him. They would take care of the farmlands and hand over half the harvest to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on the condition that they were not to be expelled from the land. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed but added the clause that the Muslims could expel them in the future if they decided to. He then deputized a Companion, Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, to visit them each year and take their payment. These non-Muslims tried to bribe Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would allow them to keep more than the half which was agreed upon. He replied that even though no one on Earth was more dearer to him than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they, the non-Muslims, were most disliked by him, he would not let the love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, nor his dislike for them prevent him from treating them fairly and doing justice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 270-271.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.¹ So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Removing Bad Elements

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. The non-Muslims of Khaybar took refuge in one of their forts and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took control of their farmlands. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to expel them from his territory they struck a deal with him. They would take care of the farmlands and hand over half the harvest to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on the condition that they were not to be expelled from the land. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed but added the clause that the Muslims could expel them in the future if they decided to. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 270-271.

During his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured religious freedom for the non-Muslims living in Islamic land but he did not allow anyone to break their agreements with him. The non-Muslims living in Khaybar and Najran did not adhere to the conditions they agreed to and because of their evil motives Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, expelled them from their lands. For example, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once attacked and severely injured when he visited his property at Khaybar. The rest of the non-Muslims who did not take part in their plans were left in peace. Even when he expelled them he ensured

they were compensated with wealth and new properties. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 206-208.

Removing bad elements from the community is essential for the safety of the community.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A Muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the Muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a Muslim is ignored by others they should

discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Being Merciful

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. After the land of Khaybar was conquered, a Jewish woman presented poisoned food to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After eating some of it, he was divinely informed that the food was poisoned. When he interrogated the Jewish woman she replied that if he was really a Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, then Allah, the Exalted, would have informed him of the poison but if he was an imposter then she would be doing the world a favor by getting rid of him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, released the woman and did not punish her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 283-284.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims

often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Utilizing the Unlawful

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. While returning to Medina, a stray arrow struck and killed a person fighting on the side of the Muslims. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, declared that he was blessed with Paradise. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, responded that the man would be punished as he unlawfully took a cloak at Khaybar instead of handing it over to the man in charge of distributing the spoils of war. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 287-288.

It is a major sin to obtain and utilise the unlawful. This includes using unlawful wealth, using items which are unlawful and eating unlawful foods. It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol is not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]. “

Your Legacy

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. Eventually, all the forts at Khaybar was conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, received some land from this conquest and asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on how best to utilize it. He advised him to set it up as a charitable endowment. The yield from the property was continuously donated to the poor. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2773.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches Muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a Muslim passes away and

leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a Muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

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

Improving Relationships

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. Eventually, all the forts at Khaybar was conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

At the advice of a Companion, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, freed one of the daughters of the leaders of Khaybar, and married her after she accepted Islam, Safiyyah Bint Huyai, may Allah be pleased with her. His intention was to soften the great enmity and hatred her former people, the Jews, had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did this on different occasions for this purpose yet in this case it did not change the stance of the Jews towards him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1599-1601.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His

commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

The Migrators

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. A group of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were living in Ethiopia, migrated to Medina during this time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was so pleased with their migration that he allocated them a share of the spoils of Khaybar. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 373.

Later on, on one occasion Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that those who migrated to Medina directly from Mecca, thereby spending more time with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were more deserving of him than the migrants from Ethiopia, who migrated to Medina at a much later date. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of this he commented that those who migrated directly from Mecca were not more deserving of him as the migrants from Ethiopia migrated twice for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, Number 4231.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

No Gender Bias

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. A group of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were living in migrated to Medina during this time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was so pleased with their migration that he allocated them a share of the spoils of Khaybar. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 373.

Amongst this group was Asma Bint Umays and her husband Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them. On one occasion, Asma, may Allah be pleased with her, went to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and commented that the women were at a loss as they were not mentioned in the Holy Quran like the men were. In response, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35:

“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the

women who do so, and the men who remember Allāh often and the women who do so - for them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 33:35, Pages 129-130.

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, explains an important teaching of Islam namely, the most honourable and best person is the one who possesses the most piety. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“O mankind...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you...”

This is when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has, such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman, namely one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in *Sunan An Nasai*, number 3106. In another Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other

examples. But the point to note, is that women should not be bothered about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it than they will be superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior. And it is clear from this verse that it is not only restricted to men.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female Muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women. And as a result they became better than the vast majority of men and women. Even if Muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then, it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety this is quite evident when one observes the news and those who behave as they please. And this reality will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a Muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety, not in arguing and debates.

Interpreting Things Positively

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he sent out a force to confront an enemy. An enemy soldier fought against the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, until he was subdued. When the soldier was about to be killed he declared the Islamic testimony of faith. This caused some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to back away from him but one Companion, Usama Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, killed the man believing he only declared faith in Islam in order to save his life. When news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he became extremely upset at Usama Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him. He kept asking Usama, may Allah be pleased with him, why he killed someone who declared the Islamic testimony of faith even after Usama, may Allah be pleased with him, gave his reasoning. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 301.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit

to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

Acting on Faith

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he sent out a force to confront an enemy. During this expedition the army came across someone who greeted them with the Islamic greeting of peace, thereby indicating he was a Muslim. One of the soldiers attacked and killed him because of an earlier unresolved issue he had with him. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he managed to convince the deceased's family to forgive the killer and take compensation instead. They eventually agreed but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the soldier very harshly for killing a Muslim. A few days later the soldier died and when he was buried the Earth threw his corpse out. His people once again buried him but the Earth again threw his corpse out. They eventually buried him under some stones. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he commented that the Earth accepts worse people than him but this occurred in order to teach people a lesson. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nise, verse 94:

“O you who have believed, when you go forth [to fight] in the cause of Allāh, investigate; and do not say to one who gives you [a greeting of] peace, “You are not a believer,”¹ aspiring for the goods of worldly life; for with Allāh are many acquisitions. You [yourselves] were like that before; then Allāh conferred His favor [guidance] upon you, so investigate. Indeed Allāh is ever, of what you do, Aware.”

This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 304-306.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the importance of supporting one's belief with sincere actions.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

"...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people."

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

No Obedience in Disobedience to Allah (SWT)

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he sent out an expedition and put a certain Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge and ordered the others to obey him. During the expedition, this leader became angered at the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and then ordered them to create a fire and enter it. But they replied that they turned to Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to escape fire and punishment. The leader's anger then subsided and the fire was extinguished. When news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he warned them that if they had entered the fire they would have remained in it and concluded that obedience to people is only in things which are good meaning, in things which do not lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 306.

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

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

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

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

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

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who

compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

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

The Visitation (Umra)

Faithful to Promises

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came with 2000 Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and brought weapons with them. The initial agreement was that they would enter Mecca only with their sheathed swords. When the non-Muslims of Mecca found out that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had set up camp outside Mecca and brought other weapons with him, they dispatched Mikraz Ibn Hafs to speak with him. Mikraz commented that they never experienced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, behaving treacherously during his youth or when he was older and then questioned the weapons he brought with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reassured them that the weapons would remain outside Mecca and he and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would enter Mecca with only their sheathed swords, just as they promised. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1629-1631.

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

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

Being Cautious

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, came with 2000 Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and brought weapons with them. The initial agreement was that they would enter Mecca only with their sheathed swords. When the non-Muslims of Mecca found out that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had set up camp outside Mecca and brought other weapons with him, they dispatched Mikraz Ibn Hafs to speak with him. Mikraz commented that they never experienced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, behaving treacherously during his youth or when he was older and then questioned the weapons he brought with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reassured them that the weapons would remain outside Mecca and he and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would enter Mecca with only their sheathed swords, just as they promised. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1629-1631.

This incident also indicates the importance of being cautious with others, especially with those who have betrayed in the past.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted.

A true believer does not blindly trust people thereby increasing the chances of being wronged by them. But if they are fooled by anyone they should overlook and pardon as this leads to their forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

But they should also change their behaviour by treading cautiously when dealing with this person thereby ensuring they do not get fooled again. There is a vast difference between forgiving others and blindly trusting them especially, after they have wronged someone.

This Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Humility Without Weakness

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. Word reached him that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were spreading news that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were under great difficulty and distress. The non-Muslims lined up close to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, to witness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then supplicated for the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, on those who demonstrated strength on that day. In order to show their strength, they partially jogged around the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, while circumambulating it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 308.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who adopts humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they understand that their final outcome or the final outcome of others is unknown

to them. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them. This reality should prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a Muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themselves if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

Kindness is Preferred

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. After the agreed time of three days passed, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca demanded that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, leave Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them that as he had proposed marriage to Maymunah Bint Harith, may Allah be pleased with her, in Mecca, he desired to hold the wedding feast there and wanted the non-Muslims to join him in the feast. But they rudely demanded that he leave Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted their response and gave the order to leave Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 310-311.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit

sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Prophetic Marriages

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, married Maymunah Bint Harith, may Allah be pleased with her, during this journey. This was his last marriage. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 310-311.

This is connected to chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verses 50-52:

“O Prophet, indeed We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have given their due compensation and those your right hand possesses from what Allāh has returned to you [of captives] and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your paternal aunts and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you and a believing woman if she gives herself to the Prophet [and] if the Prophet wishes to marry her; [this is] only for you, excluding the [other] believers. We certainly know what We have made obligatory upon them concerning their wives and those their right hands possess, [but this is for you] in order that there will be upon you no discomfort [i.e., difficulty]. And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful. You, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], may put aside whom you will of them¹ or take to yourself whom you will. And any that you desire of those [wives] from whom you had [temporarily] separated - there is no blame upon you [in returning

her]. That is more suitable that they should be content and not grieve and that they should be satisfied with what you have given them - all of them. And Allāh knows what is in your hearts. And ever is Allāh Knowing and Forbearing. Not lawful to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], are [any additional] women after [this], nor [is it] for you to exchange them for [other] wives, even if their beauty were to please you, except what your right hand possesses. And ever is Allāh, over all things, an Observer.”

These verses indicate that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was initially permitted to marry more than four women at one time. These verses make the reason quite clear for the one who studies them with an open mind. The discomfort mentioned in these verses refers to the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of conveying the teachings of the Holy Quran and his traditions to the community and by extension to the world. These teachings can be grouped into two aspects. The first is his public life, which the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were responsible for learning about and conveying forward. The second was his private life, which his family, such as his wives, were responsible for learning about and conveying forward. It is clear from history it took thousands of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to convey the teachings of his public life so how could it be possible for four wives, the limit set by Islam for Muslims, to convey the teachings of his private life? This was the reason he was allowed more than four wives at one time, in order to make his mission easier. This has been indicated in the verses under discussion. This is further supported by the last part of the main verses under discussion where it seems that the allowance to marry more wives was removed as he possessed enough wives who were perfect, as they varied in age and social background, to convey the teachings of his private life to the community and the world, which they fulfilled to the highest possible standard, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Generally speaking, Islam grants permission for males to marry up to four women at once whereas women can only possess a single husband at any one point in time. There are many reasons for this difference. For example, in the advent of Islam most women did not have occupations, as they do today, so whenever a woman was widowed or divorced she often had no means to sustain herself or her children. This forced women towards illegal activities. In order to eradicate this men were granted permission to marry up to four women.

In addition, when a man possesses more than one wife it is obvious who the parents are whenever one of the wives gives birth. But if a woman was allowed to marry more than one man at the same time then identifying the father would be difficult as many people cannot afford to pay for modern scientific tests. Many of those that can afford them would refute the data provided to them through these tests in order to free themselves of the burdens of parenthood. This would lead to countless social issues such as broken families and single parent homes. This law also took the prophesy into consideration that close to the end of time the population of women will increase to such a level that for every one man there will be fifty women. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4045.

The important point to note is that there is no compulsion in Islam so a woman is free to refuse marriage to a particular person. In addition, a man must always aim to treat his co-wives equally and respectfully, which has been commanded in this verse.

Finally, it is extremely strange how some object to multiple wives yet accept multiple girlfriends/partners even though the former forces a man to treat all his wives equally and ensures he fulfills the rights of each of them whereas, this kind and fair treatment simply does not exist when one has multiple girlfriends. It is strange that these people object to a marriage bound by justice and kindness yet are happy with fornication. Marriage gives rise to stable and supportive homes for children whereas, having multiple girlfriends/partners leads to broken and unsupportive homes.

Honouring Women

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. While leaving Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pursued by the daughter of his uncle, Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him. She desired to leave Mecca and live amongst the Muslims in Medina. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, took her and told his wife, Fatima, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would take her under their care. Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, argued that he had more of a right to take her under his care as she was the daughter of his uncle, and her maternal auntie was his wife. Zaid Bin Haritha, may Allah be pleased with him, argued that he had more right to take her under his care as her father was his brother, through bonds of faith formed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, years earlier. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ruled in favor of Jafar, may Allah be pleased with him, and commented that the maternal aunt is similar to the mother in status. He then consoled and praised all of them by commenting that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was from him and Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was from him. He told Jafar, may Allah be pleased with her, that he resembled him most in physical appearance and character. He told Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, that he was his freed slave and like his brother. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4251.

This is a very incredible event as only a few years prior to this the Arabs looked down upon girls and saw them as a curse on their household. As a

result many of the Arabs would bury their newborn baby girls alive. An attitude highly criticized in Islam. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verses 58-59:

“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”

Generally speaking, prior to Islam, women would themselves be counted as something which was inherited by others. Islam abolished this unjust practice and gave them rights which surpassed any other society.

On a general note, before Islam, in the age of ignorance, it was common practice for women to be equated with articles of home use. They would be bought and sold like cattle. A woman had no rights in respect to marriage. Far from being entitled to some share in the inheritance from her relatives, she herself was treated as a piece of the inheritance like other household items. She was considered as something owned by men while she was allowed to own nothing. And she could only spend according to the wishes of a man. Whereas, the man could spend any wealth which should belong to her, like wages, according to his desires. She did not even have the right to question this method. Some groups from Europe even considered women not to be a human and equated her with an animal. Women had no place in religion. They were considered unfit for worship. Some even declared women to possess no souls. It was considered completely normal for a father to kill his newborn or young daughter as they were seen as a shame on the family. Some even believed that no act of justice would be taken against the

one who killed a woman. Some customs even killed the wife of a dead husband as she was not seen fit enough to live without him. Some even declared that the purpose of women was only to serve men.

But Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught man to respect all people, made justice and equity the law and men were made responsible for fulfilling the rights of women parallel to their own rights on them. Women were made free and independent. She became the owner of her own life and property, just like men. No man can force a woman to marry someone. If she is forced to without her consent then it becomes her choice to continue the marriage or annul it. No man has a right to spend anything from what belongs to her without her consent and approval. After the death of her husband or after divorce she becomes independent and she cannot be compelled by anyone to do anything. She gets a share in the inheritance like men according to the responsibilities given to her by Allah, the Exalted. To spend on women and treat them well has been declared an act of worship by Allah, the Exalted. All these rights and more have been given to women by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is strange how those who stand up for women's rights today criticize Islam even though it gave women rights centuries earlier.

The 8th Year After Migration

Void in Life

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a non-Muslim nobleman of Mecca, Khalid Bin Walid, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to travel to Medina and accept Islam. He explained that at this time, Allah, the Exalted, placed the desire for Islam into his heart and gave him the ability to reflect on it. He then mentioned how he witnessed the lands of Arabia against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though the things which these non-Muslims did in their lands was reprehensible and he felt as if he did not belong there amongst them. He concluded that he knew the truth namely, Islam, would eventually prevail so he decided to head for Medina and accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 323.

What encouraged him further to accept Islam was the letter he received from his brother Waleed Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him. In the letter his brother showed his amazement of how someone like Khalid could be so intelligent yet so ignorant by opposing Islam. He added that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even asked about him and commented that someone like him should not be ignorant of Islam and if he put his efforts into aiding Islam that would be better for him and would bring him ahead of others in rank. His brother urged him to not miss out on this good as he already missed out on a lot of good prior to this. This has been

discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1642-1643.

Many people in all ages experience this type of emptiness from within their lives. Some even connect this feeling to a mid-life crisis. A person who experiences this often questions their purpose and seems to feel a huge void in their life even though they may possess many things and achieved much worldly success. This often occurs as these people are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation which is to gain knowledge about Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly. This is similar to a person who owns the latest mobile phone which has many features yet, due to a fault it fails to fulfil its primary goal which is to make phone calls. No matter how good these other features are the owner will always feel a void in respect to it as the phone does not fulfil its primary goal of existence. Similarly, a person will feel a void in their life even if they possess many worldly things. This feeling affects Muslims and non-Muslims. It is obvious why non-Muslims feel like this as they could not be further from fulfilling the purpose of their creation so no matter what they achieve they eventually feel this void in their life. It occurs to those Muslims who may even fulfil their obligatory duties but as they fail to strive to gain and act on the vital knowledge needed to fulfil their purpose correctly they experience this void. In most cases, they do not even understand the Arabic language so performing worship simply does not fill this void. One will not fill this void until they strive to fulfil the purpose of creation which is to gain knowledge on Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly throughout every moment of their life.

Amr Bin Aas, decided to migrate to Ethiopia after the Battle of Khandaq, as he felt Islam would prevail in Arabia. He commented that if Islam prevailed in Arabia he would prefer to live under the king of Ethiopia, Najashee, who

was his friend, and if the non-Muslims prevailed over Islam, then he already had strong ties with them. When he reached Ethiopia, he observed one of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, leaving the court of the king. He then requested the king to hand this man over to him for execution. The king became infuriated with him and commented that how could he hand the messenger of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for execution. The king then encouraged Amr to accept Islam as it was the truth. Amr then accepted Islam on the hands of the king. He then decided to head to Medina to accept Islam on the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. On his way he bumped into Khalid Bin Waleed, who was also heading to Medina to accept Islam. They both entered upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam on his hands, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1639-1641.

The Battle of Muta

Correct Perception

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force to take part in the Battle of Muta. This army was dispatched, as the ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Harith Bin Umair, may Allah be pleased with him, who was delivering a letter to the ruler of Busra was captured and killed by the governor of Balqa, an ally of the Roman king. This was practically a declaration of war against the Muslims, as killing an ambassador has always been forbidden in every age. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 382-383.

As per usual, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched the army he advised them to fear Allah, the Exalted, to avoid acting treacherously, to not kill a child, woman, an old person or someone who had isolated themselves in a monastery, to not cut down trees or tear down buildings. He told them that when they encounter the enemy they should invite to one of three options: to accept Islam, pay the tax (Jizyah) or war. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1651.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, named a commander of this army and two more successors, one after the other. The people understood from this that these specific Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would be martyred. Even a Jewish man confirmed from the previous divine teachings that whenever a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, named successors to a commander it meant that they would surely be martyred. One of the successors to the first commander was Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him. Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, wept when bidding farewell to the people. When he was questioned about his action he replied that his weeping was not due to the love of the world or people but he remembered the hereafter and the promise of Allah, the Exalted, that everyone will encounter Hell but he was not sure how he was going to escape it. Chapter 19 Maryam, verse 71:

“And there is none of you except he will come to it [Hell]. This is upon your Lord an inevitability decreed.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 326-327.

This incident indicates the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They were always focused on the hereafter and prioritized preparing for it over gathering and hoarding the luxuries of the material world. It is important for Muslims to adopt this correct perception and attitude by understanding the nature of this world and the next.

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.

Following is Best

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force to take part in the Battle of Muta. A member of this force was a Companion, Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the force to leave early in the morning but Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to delay his departure so he could offer a prayer behind the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then catch up to the rest of the army. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, witnessed him present in the Mosque for the prayer he questioned his actions. After learning of his intention, he told him that following the order given to him was greater in reward than the entire world. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 327.

This incident indicates the importance of adhering to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of following other teachings and actions, even if these are considered good in Islam.

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.

Strength in Faith

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. The army reached and encamped close to Muta where they were informed that the enemy force was around 200,000 in number. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, debated whether to continue with the mission or send a message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informing him of the situation and requesting further orders. But Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, rose and encouraged the army to fight by reminding them that their strength was not in numbers or weapons but it came from Allah, the Exalted, and in His sincere obedience. He promised the army martyrdom or victory. The army agreed and went forth remaining steadfast. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 328.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others

kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this.

The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart

first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Brilliant Tactician

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. The army reached and encamped close to Muta where they were informed that the enemy force was around 200,000 in number. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, named a commander of this army and two more successors one after the other. The people understood from this that these specific Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would be martyred. The first commander, Zaid Bin Haritha, was martyred followed by Jafar Ibn Abu Talib, and then Abdullah Bin Rawahah, may Allah be pleased with them. Then the army appointed Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, as the commander. He understood that continuing to fight would lead to the destruction of his men, something he could not accept. He decided a tactical retreat would be best as their objective of instilling fear and awe into the hearts of the Romans had been achieved when they small army challenged an army 66 times its size. He first rearranged his army units in order to give the impression that reinforcements had arrived. This caused the Roman soldiers to retreat, once the fighting commenced again, as they were put off at the thought of the Muslims gaining reinforcements. This gave the Muslim army enough time to tactically retreat with minimal casualties, around 10 losses. As the Roman army were the first to retreat, victory was granted to the Muslims as mentioned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1246. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1656-1658.

This was enough to send a clear message to all the superpowers and the non-Muslim tribes of Arabia that Islam was here to stay. This battle encouraged many of the Arab tribes to accept Islam and many of the enemies of Islam stop showing hostilities towards the Muslims as a new layer of awe and fear had become entrenched in their hearts.

Consoling Others

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. The army reached and encamped close to Muta where they were informed that the enemy force was around 200,000 in number. Some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were martyred but they remained firm. One of their commanders, Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was martyred. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of the battle by Allah, the Exalted, even before this news reached Medina. When he visited the family of Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and informed them of his martyrdom his family began to grieve. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consoled them and left their house telling the people to attend to the family of Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and make them food as they were grieving over his loss. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 339.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties is guaranteed for all this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or

money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A Muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

Finally, it is important Muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Mourning for Others

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. The army reached and encamped close to Muta where they were informed that the enemy force was around 200,000 in number. Some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were martyred but they remained firm. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of the battle by Allah, the Exalted, even before this news reached Medina. When some people of Medina found out about those who were martyred they began to wail out of grief. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed he told people to forbid them from doing so. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 340.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. They are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Divine Protection in Both Worlds

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. The army reached and encamped close to Muta where they were informed that the enemy force was around 200,000 in number. Some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were martyred but they remained firm. One of their commanders, Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was martyred. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of the battle by Allah, the Exalted, even before this news reached Medina. When he visited the family of Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and informed them of his martyrdom his family began to grieve. The wife of Jafar Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, began to speak about her orphaned children and the lack of support for them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that how could she worry about her family when he was their protector in this world and in the next. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 341.

A Muslim can obtain divine support in this world by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, 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 publicly. 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.

Finally, a Muslim can obtain divine support in the hereafter such as the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A Muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some Muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not 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. These Muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact some Muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession 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.

Respecting Leaders

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a force of 3000 soldiers to take part in the Battle of Muta. During this battle a Muslim soldier killed a Roman soldier and took his possessions which were very valuable. After killing an enemy soldier, it is permissible for the Muslim soldier to take the possessions that the enemy soldier was carrying. After the battle was over, the commander, Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, took some of these valuable possessions away from the Muslim soldier and included it in the spoils of war, which are distributed in ways prescribed by Islam, which includes a share of it going to all the soldiers present in the battle. Auf Bin Malik, who was another Muslim soldier warned Khalid, may Allah be pleased with them, to return all the valuable spoils to the Muslim soldier who had killed the Roman soldier, but the latter refused to. When they returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Auf, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned to him what had occurred and he commanded Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, to return all the valuable spoils to the Muslim soldier. Auf then publicly criticized and belittled Khalid, may Allah be pleased with them. This angered the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who then commanded Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, to not return the valuable spoils he took from the Muslim soldier. He then warned the Muslims not to belittle and insult his appointed leaders as this only encourages others to challenge their authority. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1663-1665.

This incident indicates the importance of respecting one's leaders and voicing one's constructive criticism against them in a soft and good-natured way.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

The Roman Emperor

Ashamed to Lie

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Roman Emperor Heraclius had a dream which indicated that his kingdom would eventually be overcome by a foreign nation. When he investigated, he suspected that this indicated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. At the time he was in Jerusalem and ordered his men to bring him a man who was related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who he could question. At the time Abu Sufyan was there on a trading expedition. He and his men were found and brought to Heraclius. Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan to sit in front of him and seated the companions of Abu Sufyan behind him and ordered them to object if Abu Sufyan lied to any of the questions he was asked. Abu Sufyan, who later became Muslim, narrates that even if he lied his men would never have refuted him but he still told the truth as he was a man of dignity and honor and he was therefore ashamed of lying. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 354-356.

It is important to note, at this time Abu Sufyan was not a Muslim yet still disliked lying. 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.

A Proof of Prophethood

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Roman Emperor Heraclius had a dream which indicated that his kingdom would eventually be overcome by a foreign nation. When he investigated, he suspected that this indicated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. At the time he was in Jerusalem and ordered his men to bring him a man who was related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who he could question. At the time Abu Sufyan was there on a trading expedition. He and his men were found and brought to Heraclius. Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan to sit in front of him and seated the companions of Abu Sufyan behind him and ordered them to object if Abu Sufyan lied to any of the questions he was asked. Abu Sufyan, who later became Muslim, narrates that even if he lied his men would never have refuted him but he still told the truth as he was a man of dignity and honor and he was therefore ashamed of lying. After questioning Abu Sufyan, Heraclius commented, "You (Abu Sufyan) say he (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) is of your purest lineage. Allah, the Exalted, selects Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, that way; He only takes men from the purest lines in their people. I asked you whether any other of his (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) family members were saying similar things meaning, he is imitating them, you (Abu Sufyan) said no. I asked whether he had some property you might have seized and suggested he might be saying what he is to get you to return it to him. But you said no. I asked you about his followers and you maintain that they are young, powerless and poor. That is how the followers of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are in every age. I asked you whether those who follow him like and respect him or despise and abandon him. You replied that only rarely does someone follow him then abandon him. In such circumstances the sweetness of faith does not enter a person's heart then leave again. I (Heraclius) asked you about the warfare between you two. You (Abu Sufyan) replied that sometimes it

favors you, sometimes him (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him). That is how warfare is for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they win in the end. I asked you if he betrays his word and you said he did not. If what you have said is the truth he will conquer the land beneath these feet of mine.” This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 356-357.

It is important for Muslims to strive to strengthen their faith so that they reach 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 Hudaibiya. 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 Naziyat, 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...”

Compromising on the Truth

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Roman Emperor Heraclius had a dream which indicated that his kingdom would eventually be overcome by a foreign nation. When he investigated, he suspected that this indicated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. At the time he was in Jerusalem and ordered his men to bring him a man who was related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who he could question. After questioning the non-Muslim leader of Mecca, Abu Sufyan, he became further convinced of the authenticity of the claim of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Eventually, Heraclius received a letter from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, inviting him to accept Islam. Heraclius questioned a Christian scholar who could read Hebrew about his views. The scholar told Heraclius that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was indeed the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who they were waiting for. Heraclius became convinced of Islam and then summoned the leaders of his nation into his capital chamber while he himself was seated in a higher room, out of fear of them. He told them that they should all follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he is the promised final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, their divine scriptures have spoken of in detail. He urged them to accept him so that they succeed in this world and the next. But all of the leaders rejected his plea and began to leave the chamber. He summoned them back and then declared that he was only testing their loyalty to their faith and him. They then fell in prostration to him in happiness and left. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 357.

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

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

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

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

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam.

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

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

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

Faithful to the End

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Roman Emperor Heraclius had a dream which indicated that his kingdom would eventually be overcome by a foreign nation. When he investigated, he suspected that this indicated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. At the time he was in Jerusalem and ordered his men to bring him a man who was related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who he could question. After questioning the non-Muslim leader of Mecca, Abu Sufyan, he became further convinced of the authenticity of the claim of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Eventually, Heraclius received a letter from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, inviting him to accept Islam. Heraclius questioned a Christian scholar who could read Hebrew about his views. The scholar told Heraclius that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was indeed the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who they were waiting for. Heraclius told Dihya Bin Khalifa, may Allah be pleased with him, the Muslim ambassador who delivered the letter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that he was convinced of Islam but feared for his life. Heraclius told Dihya, may Allah be pleased with him, to visit a prominent bishop, Saghatir, who the people considered highly. When Saghatir was informed of the letter, he confirmed the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they possessed detailed signs about him in their divine scriptures. Saghatir then went to a church where he publicly declared his acceptance of Islam and urged the people there to follow him but they attacked and killed him. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 362.

Saghatir accepted and declared his faith, even though he knew it would lead to trouble for him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the Muslim nation. Therefore, Muslims should not get distracted by them and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Good or Bad

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched a force to Dhu Al Salalsil. He called for Amr Bin Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, and told him he was appointing him in charge of the expedition and that Allah, the Exalted, would grant him victory and much wealth. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he did not accept Islam to gain wealth, but because it was the truth and out of desire to be with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that good (lawful) wealth was a good thing in the hands of a righteous person. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, Number 299.

It is important for Muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, Muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, “Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient.” And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a Muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if

the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Seek Unity

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched a force under the command of Amr Bin As, may Allah be pleased with him. When he reached Dhu Al Salalsil, he noted the enemy number and sent a message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requesting reinforcements. He dispatched another force under the command of Abu Ubaida Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him. When the second force reached Dhu Al Salalsil, the two forces disagreed on who would lead them and declared that each force should be led separately. But Abu Ubaida Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, was a man of fine disposition and easy-going nature and so he agreed to let Amr Bin As, may Allah be pleased with him, command both forces, as he desired to unify the men and avoid arguing. When this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on behalf of Abu Ubaida Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 370-372.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their

scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in

contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the

Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Benefit of the Doubt

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched a force under the command of Amr Bin As, may Allah be pleased with him, to Dhu Al Salalsil. Many of the other senior Companions, including Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, were ordered to join the expedition as ordinary soldiers. During a cold night Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded his men not to light any fires as he did not want the enemy to spot them. This could have resulted in an unexpected enemy attack. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not understand the wisdom behind his command and became furious with him, such as Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. But Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, calmed them down and reminded them that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, as their leader as he was knowledgeable about warfare. When the army returned, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, approved of Amr's actions, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq*, Pages 136-137 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1671.

Abu Bakr reminded the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the importance of thinking positively about others.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

The Conquest of Mecca

Failing to Uphold Agreements

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 377.

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

The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

Thinking Things Through

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware that this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they dispatched one of their leaders to Medina, Abu Sufyan, in order to reaffirm and extend the pact as they became extremely worried about the consequences of their treachery. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 379.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Obedience Comes First

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting another tribe who attacked a tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware that this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they dispatched one of their leaders to Medina, Abu Sufyan, in order to reaffirm and extend the pact as they became extremely worried about the consequences of their treachery. Abu Sufyan visited his daughter, Umm Habiba, may Allah be pleased with her, who was also the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The latter married her in order to soften the hearts of the non-Muslims of Mecca towards him and Islam. Umm Habiba, may Allah be pleased with her, prevented her father from sitting on a rug and instead folded it up. Abu Sufyan commented that he did not know whether she thought he was too good for it or the rug was too good for him. She replied that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would sit on that rug and she would therefore not allow a polytheist to use it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 379 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 388-389.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim's faith.

One of these characteristics is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Sincerity to Islam First

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting another tribe who attacked a tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware that this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they dispatched one of their leaders to Medina, Abu Sufyan, in order to reaffirm and extend the pact as they became extremely worried about the consequences of their treachery. Abu Sufyan spoke to many of the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, urging them to intercede on his behalf with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He listed the different affiliations he had with them in order to win them over, such as tribal and kinship affiliations, but they all replied in the same way. They refused to compromise on their faith in order to please him and did not desire to convince the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to renew the pact or not to renew it. They instead left the decision to their leader trusting in his divinely guided choice. When he did meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that latter simply turned away from him and did not discuss whether to renew the pact or not. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Pages 381-382 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1678-1679.

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

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

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

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

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

Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Secret Conversations

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. He often withheld military tactical information from the general public in order to protect the city of Medina, so he informed his wife, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, to prepare food for his expedition but told her to keep it a secret. When her father, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, visited his daughter, while the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not home. He observed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, preparing food. He questioned her over her actions but she remained silent. He kept asking if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to leave for an expedition and listed many locations. But Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, remained silent. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 382.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true Muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable when it is clearly not. A Muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would then doing this betrays them which contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins such as backbiting and gossiping and prevents negative feelings being developed for each other. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed about them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam such as the one declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

Observing Others with Mercy

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. Hatib Ibn Abu Balta, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a female messenger with a letter to Mecca informing the non-Muslims that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heading to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was divinely informed of this letter and as a result dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Miqdad Bin Amr and Zubair Bin Awaam, may Allah be pleased with them, to intercept her and bring back the letter before it reached Mecca. The plan was a success and the letter was returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who then summoned Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, and questioned him about his letter. Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that he had not apostatized nor preferred disbelief to Islam but he only wrote the letter as he had no one in Mecca who could protect his family and property there and believed that through the letter he would gain their favour and as a result they would not harm his family and property. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed he had spoken the truth. Umar Ibn Khattab, asked permission to execute Hatib, may Allah be pleased with them, for treason but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he had fought in the Battle of Badr and Allah, the Exalted, had already forgiven all the participants of the Battle of Badr. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 379 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3007. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 60 Mumtahanah, verse 1:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord. If you have come out for fighting/striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection [i.e., instruction], but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1684-1685.

Even though the intentions of Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, was not evil, as he desired to protect his family and property and full-well knew his letter to the non-Muslims would make no difference to the planned conquest of Mecca, as the non-Muslims of Mecca were already convinced of this occurring, none the less he should have remained sincere to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and entrusted his family and wealth to Allah, the Exalted. Instead of punishing him for this single mistake the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed his entire life of sacrificing for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore overlooked this single mistake.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the

Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Showing Mercy to Others

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. On the way to Mecca, two noblemen and relatives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from the non-Muslims of Mecca, Abu Sufyan Bin Haarith (not the same Abu Sufyan Bin Harb who was the leader of the non-Muslims) and Abdullah Bin Umayyah, reached the Muslim army and requested permission to see the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Initially, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused to see them, as they were two of the most vilest enemies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abu Sufyan Bin Haarith, pleaded to be seen and commented that if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not meet him, he would take his small child with him and both of them would starve in the desert until they died. This incited the compassion and mercy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and he granted them permission to see him and he honored them both and as a result they both accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1691-1692.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful

to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Greatness is in Following

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. The army left during the Holy month of Ramadan, so they were all fasting. As the journey was long and difficult the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed that some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were suffering from the fasting but they were waiting to see what he did. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, broke his fast publicly by calling for a vessel of water and drinking from it. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, followed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and broke their fast as well but some continued fasting. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of this, he criticized those who continued fasting as they did not follow what he had done. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 388.

Even though breaking or continuing fasting were not sins, those who continued fasting were criticized. This is because superiority lies in strictly following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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.

Superiority is Not in Appearance

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. The army made several stops before reaching Mecca and one of these places was Al Aqaba. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched some men to gather fruit from the local trees. While one of the Companions, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, was climbing a tree to pick its fruits, some men poked fun at him when they observed his small and thin legs. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that his thin legs were going to weigh more in the Scales of Judgement Day than the mountain of Uhud. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 390.

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

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

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

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

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

worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Sincerity to the People

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. On the way the Muslim army encountered Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He had remained in Mecca all this time to spy on the non-Muslims of Mecca, on the orders of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, observed the great army of the Muslims, 10,000 soldiers, he understood that if they entered Mecca before the non-Muslims of Mecca guaranteed their own safety through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then the army might annihilate them all. He hurried towards the Muslim army hoping to secure the safety of the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1692-1693.

Even though they were non-Muslims, Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, demonstrated how one should possess sincerity for all people, irrespective of their faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sanctuary not Vengeance

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. The army made several stops before reaching Mecca and one of these places was Marr Al Zahran, close to Mecca. Some senior members of Mecca travelled to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam. One of these men was Abu Sufyan Bin Harb, may Allah be pleased with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also declared that whoever from the non-Muslims of Mecca entered the homes of these senior members of Mecca would be safe from the Muslim army. And whoever entered their own homes and locked their doors would be safe and finally whoever sought refuge in the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, would be safe from the Muslim army. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 391-392.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted,

does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Islam is Sincere Obedience

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. The army made several stops before reaching Mecca and one of these places was Marr Al Zahran, close to Mecca. Here some senior members of Mecca travelled to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam. One of these men was Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him. During this visit, Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, observed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, taking part in the congregational prayer behind the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He asked the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, whether or not the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would do anything the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded. Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, replied in the affirmative and added that if he ordered them to give up food and drink they would obey him. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, performed ablution, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, scrambled for the leftover ablution water in order to derive blessings from it. Witnessing this, Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that he had never seen anything like this before not even in the palaces of the Persian or Roman Kings. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 394.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “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.

Disobedience Leads to Failure

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a leader of Mecca, Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, became astonished at their power and number. He commented that he saw many faces he did not recognize who had come to conquer Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that this was only a consequence of the actions of the non-Muslims. The Muslim army believed in him when the non-Muslims of Mecca called him a liar and they assisted him when the non-Muslims of Mecca exiled him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 393.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one

is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

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

Obedience in Ease and Success

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. One of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that this day was a day of great battle where sanctuary for their enemies was disallowed. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of this, he corrected his words by declaring that today was in fact the day Allah, the Exalted, glorifies His House, the Kaaba, a day by which the Kaaba will be adorned meaning, with sincere worship of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 394.

This declaration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reminds Muslims that they should maintain sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease and success. Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as

abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

Pinnacle of Humility

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rode into the proximity of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he bowed so low out of humility to Allah, the Exalted, that his face almost touched his saddle. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 397.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

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

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil

they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the

Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Make Things Easy

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, led his elderly father to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that he could accept Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, saw them coming he commented that it would have been better if he left his elderly father at home and he himself would have gone to visit him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that it was more fitting for his father to come to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then the other way round. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 398-399.

Even though Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke the truth, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the importance of making things easy for others. Unfortunately, some Muslims always strive to extract their full rights and more from others. In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As

advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without troubling themselves, especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

Compassion

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had previously declared that whoever from the non-Muslims of Mecca entered the home of Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, would be safe from the Muslim army. And whoever entered their own homes and locked their doors would be safe and finally whoever sought refuge in the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, would be safe from the Muslim army. He ordered the army to only fight those who fought them but listed a few people who were to be executed if found. These people were not extended security as their crimes were too enormous, such as treason, which even in this day and age is a capital crime. For example, a few years earlier, Miqyas Bin Subaba, arrived in Medina professing Islam. He requested financial compensation on behalf of his Muslim brother, Hisham Bin Subaba, may Allah be pleased with him, who was accidentally killed by a Muslim during a battle. After he received this money from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he killed the Muslim soldier who accidentally killed his brother. Miqyas then fled to Mecca where he apostatized. Miqyas was sentenced to death by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during the conquest of Mecca as he committed two capital crimes, both for which execution was warranted. The first was killing the Muslim soldier, especially after taking financial compensation, and the other was for apostatizing after accepting

Islam. He was found and killed in Mecca. In regard to him, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 93:

“But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allāh has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.”

Another man, Abdul Uzaa Bin Khatal, initially accepted Islam and when he was sent to collect the obligatory charity from a village, he killed a Muslim, after a dispute occurred between them. He then apostatized and fled to the non-Muslims and even employed two female singers to compose insulting poems about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, when the Muslim army entered Mecca, one of the men sentenced to death for apostatizing from Islam, Abdullah Ibn Sa'd, fled to a Companion, Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, begging him for security. He in turn took the man to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and pleaded on his behalf. Even though his crimes were serious, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, still pardoned him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 212-213 and 402, in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 396-397 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 4:93, Page 59.

Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble

characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Forgiving and Moving On

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. A staunch enemy of Islam, who from day one took every opportunity to harm the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Ikrima Bin Abu Jahl, fled Mecca on the day it was conquered. His wife accepted Islam and requested for his protection from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he granted. She located Ikrima and told him what occurred. Even though he found it difficult to believe, he returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and accepted Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, overlooked and forgave his past behaviour against him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 403-404.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car

accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Superiority and Success

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. At the time 360 idols of worship were placed around the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, struck each one with his staff while declaring that the truth had come and falsehood had gone. The truth had come and falsehood was powerless. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 408-409.

Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Keys of the Kaaba

Islam is Gentleness

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, carrying the keys to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, after taking it from the non-Muslim who was previously in charge of the keys, Uthman Bin Talha. Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, requested to keep the keys with himself so that he could become the custodian of the Kaaba. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned Uthman Bin Talha, and returned the keys to him and told him that this day was a day of piety and good faith. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 408.

According to Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 4:58, Page 54, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned the keys to Uthman because Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners; and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

In response to this, Uthman accepted Islam, may Allah be pleased with him.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Adhere to Islamic Teachings

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, entered the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he witnessed physical representations of the Angels and people. He saw how the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had been drawn holding a divining arrow, something associated with polytheism. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, became angry and declared that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, had nothing to do with these things and that he was neither a Christian nor a Jew. He added that he was an upright Muslim and not a polytheist. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then gave the command for these physical representations to be destroyed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 408.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to

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

Real Nobility

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, publicly declared that all forms of worldly nobility and conceit in ancestry had been crushed under his feet that day. He also recited chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 411 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 394-395.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of

the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

No Racism in Islam

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Bilal Bin Rabah, may Allah be pleased with him, to announce the Call to Prayer from the roof of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 411.

It is important to note that Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him, was an Ethiopian and former slave and therefore was regarded as lowly and insignificant according to the society of that time. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have easily given someone who was considered noble by the society of that time the order to announce the call to prayer yet he specifically chose Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or

their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

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

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

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

A Muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Forgiving Leads to Elevation

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the door of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he questioned the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca about what they hoped from him. They replied that they expected good treatment from him as he was their noble brother and a son of a noble man. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that they were free to leave unharmed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 407-408.

This event is connected to chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 92:

"He said, "No blame will there be upon you today. May Allah forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.""

This verse mentions an incredibly important characteristic to adopt. This is to be forbearing when one encounters difficulties especially, difficulties from people. One should never reply evil with evil as this contradicts the behaviour of a successful Muslim. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

Replying good with good is nothing special as even animals show kindness in return for kindness. What is special is showing good in reply to evil especially, when a person is in a position to take revenge, just like the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was. In reality, behaving in this positive manner benefits oneself as the one who learns to let things go and forgive others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

In fact, as proven by this great event according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the one who forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be raised in honour by Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, this verse indicates that a person should not believe they are superior to the people they have forgiven. As in reality the superior one is the person who is forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this type of pride and fails to repent will enter Hell according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4174.

Finally, this verse indicates that a person should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As long as a Muslim sincerely repents and strives to be better they should hope for forgiveness. But a Muslim should not continue sinning without trying to change and expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them as this is not hope it is merely wishful thinking.

Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising not to return to the same or similar sin and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The Women's Pledge

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. After Mecca was conquered and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, publicly forgave the non-Muslims, they all entered Islam. Even the women came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to pledge their allegiance to Islam. One of these women was Hind Bint Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan Bin Harb, may Allah be pleased with him. Hind was the one who mutilated the body of Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, after the Battle of Uhud, and even chewed on his liver. She initially concealed her identity, out of shame and fear, from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But during the pledge, she asked some questions in order to clarify certain matters and even commented when these women were commanded not to commit fornication or adultery, that a free woman would never do such a thing. During her conversation with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he recognized her and she apologized for her past deeds and accepted Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forgave her and accepted her pledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1714-1715.

Before accepting Islam, Hind was a polytheist yet boldly commented that no free woman would ever commit fornication or adultery as that was seen as something only shameless women would do. It is embarrassing how people in this day and age, who claim to be forward thinkers, believe the opposite.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 68:

“...and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty.”

The true servants of Allah, the Exalted, avoid all forms of illegal relationships. The fact that adultery has been placed next to polytheism and killing an innocent person in this verse indicates its severity.

Muslims should take precautions in order to avoid being tempted into illegal relationships. Firstly, they should learn to lower their gaze. This does not mean one should always stare at their shoes but it means they should avoid looking around unnecessary especially in public places. They should avoid staring at others and maintain respect for the opposite gender. Just like a Muslim would not like someone staring at their sister or daughter they should not stare at other people's sisters and daughters. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 30:

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision¹ and guard their private parts. That is purer for them...”

Whenever possible a Muslim should avoid spending time alone with the opposite gender unless they are related in a way which prohibits marriage. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1862.

Muslims should dress and behave with modesty. Dressing modestly avoids attracting the glances of strangers and behaving modestly prevents one from taking the initial steps which could lead to an illegal relationship such as talking unnecessarily to the opposite gender.

Understanding the blessings of avoiding illegal relationships is another way to protect oneself from them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed Paradise to the one who safeguards their tongue and chastity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2408.

Fearing the punishment of being involved in illegal relationships will also aid a Muslim to avoid them. For example, faith will depart from the person who is committing fornication. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4690.

In reality, a Muslim does not need illegal relationships as Islam prescribes marriage. Those who cannot afford to marry should fast often as this also helps to control one's desires and actions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3398.

The Friends of Prophethood

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. After witnessing this great victory, the Companions of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, sadly questioned each other whether the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would now stay in Mecca or return with them to Medina. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was notified of this, he told them that he would live where they lived and die where they died. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Pages 415-416.

This was a demonstration of the great love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had for the Companions of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, in particular. They helped and aided him when his own relatives turned on him. They offered him security and sanctuary in their city when his own people exiled him. Muslims must strive to adopt the characteristics that are beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, if they wish to follow in the footsteps of these great Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that his true friend is the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is that they strive and obtain only what they require in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excessiveness, waste and extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that they have a good share in the prayer. This means they establish their obligatory prayers by fulfilling them correctly with all their conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. This also includes establishing the voluntary prayers which are based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the voluntary night prayer. This is in fact the best prayer after the obligatory prayers according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614.

The next thing characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this Muslim obeys 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, in public and in private. Doing so in private indicates a person's sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they only perform righteous deeds for His sake. This is the one who firmly remembers that no matter where they are the inner and outer aspects of their being is constantly being observed by Allah, the Exalted. If one persists on this belief they will adopt excellence of faith which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. It means they act, such as

performing the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, watching them. This encourages righteous deeds and prevents sins.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that they avoid obtaining any type of fame or social honor. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, this desire is more destructive to a Muslim's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause to a herd of sheep. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than their craving for wealth. A person will even spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but the one who receives it without asking for it will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment.

This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, warns that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that their death comes quickly, their mourners are few and the inheritance they leave behind is small.

Their mourners are few as they avoided seeking social honor and preferred to remain anonymous as they feared showing off their righteous deeds to others. But the few mourners they do have are far better than the many the rich and famous have. Their few mourners are sincere in their sadness and genuinely supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for their forgiveness whereas the many mourners of the rich and famous do not behave in this manner.

Their inheritance is small as they directed the vast majority of their blessings towards the hereafter by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They understood that anything they left behind would fall into the hands of others who would enjoy the blessings while they, the deceased, will be held accountable for obtaining it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds accompany them in

their lonely grave. Therefore, they concentrate on obtaining righteous deeds by using their blessings correctly and avoid misusing them thereby committing sins. Even though, they leave little behind as inheritance they in fact take a lot with them to the hereafter in order to support themselves in their moment of need. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 18:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow...”

Sincerity to the Public

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, and after the conquest of Mecca, Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, was sent to the Banu Judhaymah tribe in order to call them to Islam. Even though they had already accepted Islam, due to a misunderstanding, some of their tribesmen were killed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to compensate the tribe for the error. He paid compensation for those killed and compensated them for the loss of wealth and even for the water bowl of a dog. He even gave them the remaining wealth that was with him in case there was an error in compensating them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, approved of his actions. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Volume 1, Page 190.

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

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

prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

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

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

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

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

Justice for All

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. While he was still in Mecca, a woman from a noble family was caught committing theft which was serious enough to warrant the legal punishment of Islam. The noble family approached a Companion, Usama Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, and urged him to intercede on her behalf with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When this occurred, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, became greatly angered and criticized Usama, may Allah be pleased with him, for trying to reduce the legal punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then addressed the community and warned them that the previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state, declared that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Then he commanded for the woman to be punished according to the law. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 348-349 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787.

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a Muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an

individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

Striving and Good Intention

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that there was no longer any migration from Mecca. Meaning, migration from there was no longer a duty on Muslims as it had now become an abode of Islam. But there was only striving in the cause of Allah, the Exalted, and a Muslim's intentions that remained in effect. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 433.

This incident reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

In addition, the importance of intention is also highlighted in this incident.

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.

Indicating the End

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 415-416.

As a result of this great victory the vast majority of the Arabs accepted Islam. In respect to this Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 110 An Nasr, verses 1-3:

“When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes. Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of Repentance.”

According to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4430, the great Companions, Umar Bin Khattab and Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that Allah, the Exalted, announced the

passing away of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to him in these verses, as his mission had reached its climax.

These verses indicate the importance of remaining steadfast on the sincere obedience and remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, till one's death.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for Muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain

and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

These stages are the key to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

The Battle of Hunayn

Eliminating Corruption

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requested a non-Muslim, Safwan Bin Umayya, to loan the Muslim army weapons and armor for the battle. Safwan asked if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was planning on taking the equipment by force as he had now control over Mecca. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised him that it was only a loan and he would return everything back to him. After the battle ended he did fulfill his promise and Safwan Bin Umayya, may Allah be pleased with him, then accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 439-440.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of

others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

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

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

Maintain the Purity of Islam

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. On the way to Hunayn, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was accompanied by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who conquered Mecca with him and those Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who very recently accepted Islam, after the conquest of Mecca. These new converts used to revere a great green tree called Dhat Anwat. They would journey to it each year and hang their weapons on it, make sacrifices near it and spend the day there. When these converts passed by a large green tree on the way to Hunayn, they remembered the Dhat Anwat and requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to establish them a tree in Islam which was like Dhat Anwat. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized them and warned them that these ancient cultural and religious practices had no value. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 441.

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.

Victory in Obedience

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. During the battle the Muslim army was overwhelmed and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, temporarily retreated from the battlefield. But after they were summoned at the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of them pushed forward until Allah, the Exalted, granted them victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 451.

This initial difficulty occurred as some of the younger Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, prior to the battle, declared that their large army would not be defeated. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 25-26:

“Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of Hunayn, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all, and the earth was confining for you with [i.e., in spite of] its vastness; then you turned back, fleeing. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down soldiers [i.e., angels] whom you did not see and punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers.”

This incident indicates the importance of understanding that true success is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. True success is not linked to worldly possessions, great numbers or physical strength.

Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for Muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day Muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many Muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, Muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid Muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”

Steadfast in Difficulty

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. During the battle the Muslim army was overwhelmed and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, temporarily retreated from the battlefield. But after they were summoned at the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of them pushed forward until Allah, the Exalted, granted them victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 451.

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In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by

pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness..."

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's

duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Being Just

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. During the battle the Muslim army was overwhelmed and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, temporarily retreated from the battlefield. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who stood his ground and remained with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Eventually, after they were summoned at the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of them pushed forward until Allah, the Exalted, granted them victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 451 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq, Page 141.

During the battle, Abu Qataadah, may Allah be pleased with him, killed an enemy soldier. After the victory, they were told that whoever could prove he killed an enemy soldier would be allowed to take their possessions, such as their weapons. Initially, no one verified the story of Abu Qataadah, may Allah be pleased with him, until another confirmed that the possessions of the enemy soldier he had killed was with him. This man requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to allow him to keep the possessions instead of handing them over to Abu Qataadah, may Allah be pleased with him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, interjected and commented that he should not be allowed to keep the possessions when they rightfully belonged to one of the lions of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, Abu Qataadah, may Allah be pleased with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then had the possessions handed over to Abu Qataadah, may

Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq, Pages 142-143.

This interjection of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, clearly indicated his just and fair nature.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things.

This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.¹ So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

The Siege of Taif

Freedom from Humiliating Slavery

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, announced to the enemy that every slave who left the enemy and accepted Islam would be set free from their slavery. Some of the enemy slaves left Taif and joined the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and he set them free. This was in fact his usual practice when dealing with slaves. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 471.

Whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a slave/servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets,

peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

Dangers of Being Two-Faced

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. When Taif was besieged a man requested and was granted permission to speak to the people of Taif and to invite them towards Islam. This man instead betrayed Islam by telling the people of Taif to remain firm against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he returned to the camp of the Muslims he told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that he had invited the people of Taif towards Islam but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rebuked him and recounted what he actually said. This man understood the truth and sincerely repented and accepted Islam with conviction. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 473.

Being two-faced is when a person changes their behaviour depending on who they are interacting with in order to please them so that they gain worldly things, such as respect and fame. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873, that whoever adopts a two faced mentality will have two tongues of fire on the Day of Judgment. It is the duty of a Muslim to remain honest and consistent in their speech and actions and only seek the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted in all their activities. The one who behaves in this manner will be protected by Allah, the Exalted, from any long-term negative effects which can result from being consistently

honest. But the one who follows the path of the hypocrites will lose out on the mercy and protection of Allah, the Exalted, so that they are left to wander blindly in misguidance. Allah, the Exalted, will ensure that, sooner or later, their evil intentions are exposed to the people they aim to please so that they lose out on obtaining worldly blessings and become loathed by their society. This worldly punishment is small compared to the punishment reserved for them in the hereafter unless they sincerely repent.

Leniency and Second Chances

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. The non-Muslims of Taif were besieged for approximately 30 days but they were not conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the Muslim army to withdraw from Taif and supplicated for their guidance. Perhaps Allah, the Exalted, prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif due to the choice made years earlier, before the migration to Medina, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was given the option of destroying the people of Taif because of their maltreatment of him. But he turned down this option and instead commented that he hoped they would eventually accept Islam. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3231. This choice of protection continued and prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif.

In addition, the people of Taif did eventually take this second chance given to them by Allah, the Exalted, to accept the truth and sent a delegation to Medina to visit the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 476.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

Extreme Kindness

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. A man once reported that after this expedition, he was riding next to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while wearing heavy boots. His camel accidentally bumped into the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his toe struck and hurt the leg of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, tapped the man's foot with his whip and told him to ride away from him as he caused him pain. The next day, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned the man and told him that as he had tapped his foot with his whip, he decided to compensate him. He then gifted the man 80 sheep. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 481-482.

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.

Avoiding the Unlawful

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After leaving Taif unconquered, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned towards Mecca and before distributing the spoils from the Battle of Hunayn, he declared that no Muslim soldier should take anything from the spoils of a battle before it is distributed according to Islamic law, even if the thing they took was a thread or a needle. He added, that behaving in this manner was a disgrace, fire and shame in both worlds. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1790-1792.

Generally speaking, it is a major sin to utilise the unlawful. This includes using unlawful wealth, using items which are unlawful and eating unlawful foods. It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol are not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

What Do You Seek

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned towards Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often gave more to the newly converted Muslims in order to strengthen their hearts. Some of the younger Companions of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, felt neglected in this particular case. When this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he summoned them and questioned whether they were not satisfied with the fact that while other people took home spoils of war they would take home the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They replied in unison that they were satisfied with this. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 483.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

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

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

Love for the Companions (RA)

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned towards Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often gave more to the newly converted Muslims in order to strengthen their hearts. Some of the younger Companions of Medina, the Helpers, may Allah be pleased with them, felt neglected in this particular case. When this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he summoned them and questioned whether they were not satisfied with the fact that while other people took home spoils of war they would take home the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They replied in unison that they were satisfied with this. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, added that if he had not migrated to Medina thereby making him a migrant, he would have been from the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. And if the world journeyed down one valley and the Helpers from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, journeyed down a separate valley, he would surely journey down the valley which the Helpers from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, journeyed down. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 483 and in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 237-238.

This indicates the great love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had for the Companions from Medina, and by extension the rest of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

Strive for Independence

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often gave more to the newly converted Muslims in order to strengthen their hearts. When some complained about this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that he gave to those who he feared would be impatient and resentful and he refrained from giving to those who were self-sufficient and whose goodness was inspired to them by Allah, the Exalted. He concluded that one of the people from the latter pious group was Amr Bin Taghlib, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Pages 490-491 and in a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, Number 3145.

In a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever holds back from asking others will be granted independence. And whoever sincerely tries to be patient will be granted patience by Allah, the Exalted. And whoever is content with what they possess will be made self-sufficient. He concluded that there is no gift greater than patience.

There is no harm in asking for help from others when one is in need but a Muslim should not get into this habit as it can lead to a loss of self-respect. This can be dangerous as the one who loses self-respect is more likely to commit sins as they stop caring what Allah, the Exalted, and others think about them.

In addition, a Muslim should strive to utilize all the means they have been granted before turning to others for help. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted independence of people by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must force patience on themselves especially, during times of difficulty. The best way to achieve this is by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, will give an uncountable reward to the patient Muslim is more likely to be patient than the one who is ignorant of this fact. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The truly rich person is the one who is not needy and greedy for things. This occurs when one becomes satisfied with what they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which is achieved when one rightfully believes that Allah, the Exalted, gives what is best to each person according to His infinite knowledge. 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.”

This person is truly rich whereas the one who is always greedy and needy for things is poor even if they possess much wealth. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420.

Finally, patience is important to adopt as it is required in each element of obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and when facing destiny. Put simply, success in worldly or religious matters is not possible without patience.

Good Against Evil

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was once walking along when a Bedouin came up to him and pulled on his mantle so roughly that it left a mark on the shoulder of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Bedouin then rudely demanded that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, give him some wealth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, smiled and ordered for the Bedouin to be given some wealth. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 489.

It is easy to reply evil with evil. But what makes a Muslim special is when they reply evil with good. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to understand that behaving in this manner will never reduce a person's rank in anyway. Otherwise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not have acted in this way. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, advises that when one replies evil with good, such as forgiving others, Allah, the Exalted, raises them in honour. So this attitude does not only benefit others but more importantly it benefits the Muslim themselves. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In addition, as advised by this verse if someone adopts this attitude they will find that those who do not treat them well will eventually become ashamed of their actions and change their attitude. Even the most toughest hearts eventually become affected when treated in this manner. For example, when a husband mistreats his wife then it is best for her to rise above a negative reply and instead reply in a nice manner. This will cause the husband to respect and love his wife more. When a colleague at work shows bad manners it is best to show them the quality of a true Muslim by replying with good manners. When one behaves like this the people around them will respect and love them more which will cause their life to become easier. But when a person replies evil with evil they will always face more evil from others which will only make their life harder in both worlds. This is quite obvious if one reflects over this for a moment. It is important to note, when others exceed the limits then one should defend themselves and detach from the person. But in most cases bad character should be replied with good character.

Make Problems Small

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, an ignorant person commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not seeking to serve Allah, the Exalted, in this distribution. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of this, he became angry and then supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and then commented that he suffered more distress from his people but still remained patient. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 492 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4335.

One of the ways of achieving patience during difficulties is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a Muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life

threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a Muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift their focus on greater difficulties they could have encountered. This can be achieved by observing others who are in more difficult situations than them. For example, a person who suffers from back pain can ponder over the person who is physically disabled. Or they could ponder over much greater difficulties such as death and Judgment Day. This comparison will reduce the significance of their difficulty and its effects, which in turn will aid them in remaining patient and steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

The Future Rebels

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, a hypocrite named Dhu Al Khuwaysira commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, grew angry and replied that if he did not act with justice then who would. When Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission to kill this obvious hypocrite, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him and commented that this man would eventually lead a rebellious faction who will enter and exit the faith of Islam just like an arrow enters and emerges from its target. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 492-493.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 58:

“And among them are some who criticize you concerning the [distribution of] charities. If they are given from them, they approve; but if they are not given from them, at once they become angry.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 9:58, Page 88.

Many Hadiths such as the one found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6934, discuss these rebels. These rebels challenged the leadership of the fourth rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. This Hadith, like many others, indicates that the rebels in most cases were devoted worshippers of Allah, the Exalted, but the thing which caused them to deviate from the true teachings of Islam was their ignorance. They foolishly gave worship more value than gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Their ignorance caused them to misinterpret the teachings of Islam which led to their heinous sins. If they possessed true knowledge this would not have happened.

It is important for Muslims to understand how knowledge can prevent sins especially, towards others, such as domestic abuse. One only refrains from wronging others when they fear the consequences of their actions meaning, being held accountable and punished by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. But the foundation and root of fear of the consequences of one's actions is knowledge. Without knowledge one will never fear the consequences of their actions. This will allow their ignorance to encourage them towards committing sins and wronging others.

If society desires to reduce the cases of domestic abuse and other crimes against people they must give priority to gaining and acting on knowledge as worship alone will not cause this to happen just like it did not prevent the rebels from deviating from Islam and causing great distress for innocent people. Chapter 35 *Fatir*, verse 28:

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

Failing the Holy Quran

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war, a hypocrite named Dhu Al Khuwaysira commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, grew angry and replied that if he did not act with justice then who would. When Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission to kill this obvious hypocrite the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him and commented that this man would eventually lead a rebellious faction who will enter and exit the faith of Islam just like an arrow enters and emerges from its target. He concluded that when these people recite the Holy Quran, it does not descend beyond their throats meaning, it does not reach their spiritual hearts. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 493.

This means they failed to understand and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Kindness to Relatives

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. The captives from this battle included the foster sister of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Shayma, may Allah be pleased with her. When she reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, she proved who she was, as decades had passed since they lived together, by reminding him of the bite mark on her back, which was caused by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when he was an infant. He then spread out his cloak for her to sit on and treated her well. She accepted Islam and he gave her the option of remaining with him, where he would greatly honour her, or she could return to her people with gifts and provisions. She chose the latter option and was therefore released with honour and gifts. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 494.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will

always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons.

Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

Doing Good

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif and eventually left it unconquered. After the spoils of war, including the spoils of war from the Battle of Hunayn, were distributed, the Hawazin tribe sent a delegation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declaring their acceptance of Islam and asked for some of the spoils of war, which was taken from them to be returned. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them if they preferred their wealth or relatives who had been taken as prisoners of war. The Hawazin delegation responded that they preferred their relatives to be freed. He then advised them to rise after the congregational prayer and publicly urge him and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to release their captured relatives to them. When they did as instructed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, immediately responded that any captives that fell in his lot from the spoils of war would immediately be returned to them. The Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, immediately offered their captives to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to do with them as he pleased. Some of the newly converted Muslims refused to hand their captives back to the Hawazin delegation. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then urged them all to comply with his wish and promised them a much larger share in the next spoils of war they received. Eventually, all the Muslims agreed to release the captives back to the Hawazin delegation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 493 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 414-415.

This is connected to chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a Muslim likes and loves. For example, Muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless Muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that Muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.

A Successful Pilgrimage

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, perform the Visitation (Umra) and then headed back to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 500.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the Visitation (Umra) is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

Facing Danger

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif and left it after some days without conquering the city. Sometime later, some of the inhabitants of Taif decided to accept Islam, as it had prevailed over the Arabian Peninsula. One of these inhabitants was Urwa Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, who was one of the leaders of the people of Taif. After accepting Islam, Urwa Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to call his tribe, the Banu Thaqif, towards Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned him that they would kill him, as he knew how stubborn and dangerous his tribe was. But he replied that his tribe loved him and would not harm him. When he returned home and publicly invited his tribe towards Islam, they attacked him with arrows and martyred him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 3, Page 500 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1777-1778.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes,

businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

A Simple Life

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, performed the Visitation (Umra) and then headed back to Medina. When leaving Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Attab Bin Asid, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of Mecca and gave him a salary of one silver coin a day. Attab, may Allah be pleased with him, supplicated for Allah, the Exalted, to keep a person hungry and greedy if they failed to be satisfied with one silver coin a day. He concluded that he did not require anyone after that day meaning, in respect to earning wealth. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 500-501.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves

fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

The 9th Year After Migration

Adhering to the Lawful

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched some men to different areas to collect the obligatory charity. One of these men returned and handed over the obligatory charity he collected to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet kept some wealth and commented that it was given to him as a gift. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then delivered a sermon whereby he did not mention the name of the man in order to avoid embarrassing him yet discussed his actions. He strongly criticized what he had done and made it clear that the gift was only given to him as he was collecting the obligatory charity. He made it clear that only the wealth allotted to a charity collector by the leader is lawful for them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 7174 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1798-1800.

Taking a gift in this situation is considered a bribe.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who offers bribes and the one who takes bribes are both cursed.

A curse involves the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs true lasting success in both worldly and religious matters is not possible. Whatever worldly success one obtains such as wealth through a bribe will become a source of great difficulty and punishment in both worlds unless one sincerely repents.

In addition, without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the three aspects of faith are not possible to fulfill correctly namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Unfortunately, in this day and age the major sin of bribery has become very common in all parts of the world. The only difference is that in third world countries it is done openly and in more developed countries secretly. In most cases, bribery involves a person offering gifts to influential people, such as a judge, in order to gain something which is not theirs. The only time a bribe will not be recorded as a sin is when one is forced to offer a bribe in order to recover their own property. The curse in this case is on the one who takes the bribe.

It is important to note, if Muslims as a whole desire to eliminate bribery and other corrupt practices then they must avoid them themselves. Only when this correct attitude is adopted on an individual level will it affect those in social and political positions of influence. The reason these people act in this way is because they observe the society as a whole acting on corrupt practices themselves. But if the society on an individual level rejected these practices no person in a position of social or political

influence would dare act in this way as they know the people would not stand for it.

The Battle of Tabuk

Obedience in Ease and Difficulty

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. Allah, the Exalted, revealed many verses of the Holy Quran criticizing them, such as chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 38:

“O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allāh, you adhere heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But what is the enjoyment of worldly life compared to the Hereafter except a [very] little.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 1 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:38, Page 87.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties than when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed, such as this one, involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Using Blessings

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. Allah, the Exalted, revealed many verses of the Holy Quran criticizing them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 1

Some attempted to excuse themselves from joining in the expedition because of their worldly preoccupations and a lack of means. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 41:

“Go forth, whether light or heavy, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the cause of Allāh. That is better for you, if you only knew.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:41, Page 87.

This verse indicates that a person should not be concerned with their lack of resources and instead use whatever they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

Poor Excuses

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The hypocrites made many foolish and poor excuses in order to refrain from taking part in this difficult battle even though it was obligatory on them to respond and take part. For example, a man pleaded to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to excuse him from taking part as he was afraid he would not be able to resist the Byzantine women they would encounter while travelling. As this man would clearly be a liability and not an asset to the expedition, he was excused from participating. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 49:

“And among them is he who says, "Permit me [to remain at home] and do not put me to trial." Unquestionably, into trial they have fallen. And indeed, Hell will encompass the disbelievers.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 2.

Muslims should not compromise on any duty for worldly things as these things will eventually become a burden for them let alone the punishment which awaits them in the next world if they do not sincerely repent.

A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that if they fail to fulfil their obligatory duties they will somehow find a way out of the judgment and punishment of Allah, the Exalted. Simply ignoring one's disobedience and the reality of Judgment Day will not make it go away. When one accepted Islam as their faith and became a Muslim this included accepting the responsibility of fulfilling the duties which accompany Islam. A person who accepts a job by definition accepts the duties which come with it. If they simply refuse to fulfil their duties they will undoubtedly be sacked. Similarly, the one who refuses to fulfil their obligatory duties after accepting Islam as their religion may well find themselves surrounded by punishment and difficulties in both worlds.

In reality, the obligatory duties are not many and do not require that much time or effort. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that He does not burden someone with more than they can handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

So any duty which is obligatory on a person can be carried out by them. It is only their extreme laziness and poor judgment which prevents them from doing it. Muslims must therefore change their attitude and fulfil their

duties according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Fooling Others

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The hypocrites made many foolish and poor excuses in order to refrain from taking part in this difficult battle even though it was obligatory on them to respond and take part. They even tried hard to misguide others by putting them off from joining this expedition. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 Tawbah, verses 81-82:

“Those who remained behind rejoiced in their staying [at home] after [the departure of] the Messenger of Allāh and disliked to strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allāh and said, “Do not go forth in the heat.” Say, “The fire of Hell is more intense in heat” - if they would but understand. So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 241-242.

A part of hypocrisy is that a person not only commits evil deeds themselves and abstains from righteous deeds but they encourage others to do the

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

This incident also warns against bad companionship.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the

Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Penalty for Treason

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The hypocrites made many foolish and poor excuses in order to refrain from taking part in this difficult battle even though it was obligatory on them to respond and take part. They even tried hard to misguide others by putting them off from joining this expedition. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 Tawbah, verses 81-82:

“Those who remained behind rejoiced in their staying [at home] after [the departure of] the Messenger of Allāh and disliked to strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allāh and said, "Do not go forth in the heat." Say, "The fire of Hell is more intense in heat" - if they would but understand. So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 241-242.

The hypocrites organized a meeting at the house of a non-Muslim, Suwailim, in order to deter people from their obligatory duty to take part in

the expedition of Tabuk. When their act of treason reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of investigating the people who attended and having them executed he chose to send a message to all the hypocrites and therefore dispatched someone to burn Suwailim's house down. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1822-1823.

If a person cannot aid others in good, the least they can do is remain neutral.

Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

Useful Wealth

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, urged people to donate towards the expedition. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, assisted according to their strength and did not hold back in the least. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701, discusses when Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, donated 1000 gold coins. He poured them in the lap of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who commented that from then on nothing could harm his faith. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 3.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, offered half his wealth in charity. Whereas, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, donated all his wealth. When he was asked about what he left for his family, he replied that he left Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3675.

Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, donated four thousand silver coins. The hypocrites accused him of showing off and as a result Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 79:

“Those who criticize the contributors among the believers concerning [their] charities and [criticize] the ones who find nothing [to spend] except their effort, so they ridicule them - Allāh will ridicule them, and they will have a painful punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 2, Page 192 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:79, Page 91.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the rich in this world will be poor in the hereafter unless they spend their wealth correctly but these people are a few in number.

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter, or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day as they will be held accountable and even punished over them.

In addition, those who fail to spend their wealth correctly will find that their wealth abandons them at their grave and so they will reach the hereafter

empty handed meaning, as a pauper. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. The deceased will leave the wealth behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it.

Finally, as the wealthy are distracted by gaining, hoarding, safeguarding and increasing their wealth it distracts them from performing righteous deeds which is the thing that will make someone rich on Judgment Day. In reality, losing out on this will make them poor.

It is important to note, spending wealth correctly is not only donating charity but includes one's spending on their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without being wasteful or extravagant.

The truly rich person is the one who uses their wealth correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. And this attitude is not dependent of having much wealth. Any amount of wealth used correctly will cause one to become rich even if they possess little wealth. In reality, this person takes their wealth with them to the hereafter and this attitude provides them free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds which only increases their richness in the hereafter.

Quality is Observed

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, urged people to donate towards the expedition. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, assisted according to their strength and did not hold back in the least.

Abu Aqeel, may Allah be pleased with him, spent the entire night working and as a result donated a handful of dates towards the expedition. The hypocrites mocked his donation and as result Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 79:

“Those who criticize the contributors among the believers concerning [their] charities and [criticize] the ones who find nothing [to spend] except their effort, so they ridicule them - Allāh will ridicule them, and they will have a painful punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad Kandhlawi's, Hayatus Sahabah, Volume 2, Pages 191-192 and in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:79, Page 91.

Even the women donated as much as they could towards this expedition, such as their jewelry. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 426.

This incident indicates the importance of quality over quantity.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim should save themselves from Hell even by giving half a date fruit in charity.

This Hadith like many other teachings of Islam indicates the importance of quality over quantity. The Devil often puts off Muslims from performing righteous deeds by making them believe the deed is too small and therefore insignificant to Allah, the Exalted. It is important for a Muslim not to fall for this trap and instead strive to perform all righteous deeds, big or small, as Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly observes one's quality and judges people based on this. An aspect of this quality is one's intention meaning, are they doing it purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, or for some other reason such as showing off. A Muslim should firstly concentrate on correcting the quality of their deed such as possessing a good intention and ensure that the source of the good deed, such as giving charity, is from a lawful source as any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will not be accepted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in

Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661. Next, a Muslim should perform all voluntary righteous deeds according to their means and strength. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465, that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the regular ones even if they are considered small.

In addition, regularly performing good deeds is more likely to change a Muslim for the better than doing a big deed once in a blue moon. In respect to voluntary charity, a Muslim should donate regularly according to their means even if it is a single pound and firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, will turn this into a mountain of reward on Judgment Day. This in fact has been promised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 662.

To conclude, a Muslim should concentrate on quality over quantity and perform deeds regularly according to their means.

Genuine Sincerity

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. Some of the more poorer Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not possess the resources to take part in this long and difficult expedition and in some cases the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not possess the resources to give to them either. Even though Allah, the Exalted, Himself excused them, they were so grieved that they would weep for not being able to take part in the expedition. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 92:

“Nor [is there blame] upon those who, when they came to you for you to take them along, you said, “I can find nothing upon which to carry you.” They turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the cause of Allah].”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 5.

Their grief and weeping was only due to their sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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.

Sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, 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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

The Reward for Guidance

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. Some of the more poorer Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not possess the resources to take part in this long and difficult expedition and in some cases the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not possess the resources to give to them either. Even though Allah, the Exalted, Himself excused them, they were so grieved that they would weep for not being able to take part in the expedition. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 92:

“Nor [is there blame] upon those who, when they came to you for you to take them along, you said, “I can find nothing upon which to carry you.” They turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the cause of Allah].”

Two of these poor Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were seen weeping by another, Ibn Yamin, may Allah be pleased with him. Ibn Yamin, may Allah be pleased with him, then gave them his camel and provided them with some dates so that they could join the expedition. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 5.

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

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

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

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

Pure In Intention

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. Some of the more poorer Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not possess the resources to take part in this long and difficult expedition and in some cases the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not possess the resources to give to them either. Even though Allah, the Exalted, Himself excused them, they were so grieved that they would weep for not being able to take part in the expedition. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 92:

“Nor [is there blame] upon those who, when they came to you for you to take them along, you said, “I can find nothing upon which to carry you.” They turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the cause of Allah].”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 5.

Waathilah Bin Aqsa, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of these poorer men, who offered his share of the spoils of war to any person who would be willing to help him join the army. An old Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, offered to share his riding animal and food with him so he could join the expedition. In a later expedition, Waathilah, may Allah be pleased with him, gained some spoils of war and offered them to the old Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, who refused to take it and commented that he only desired reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Pages 1818-1819.

This indicates the importance of 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.

Much Talk Little Action

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina and setup camp at Thaniyyat Al Wada. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, and his followers were with the Muslim army but setup camp away from the main camp. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, set forth again, Abdullah Bin Ubayy stealthily remained behind with the hypocrites and did not join the expedition as they promised. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 7.

In this regard Allah, the Exalted, many verses such as chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 47:

“Had they gone forth with you, they would not have increased you except in confusion, and they would have been active among you, seeking [to cause] you fitnah [i.e., chaos and dissension]. And among you are avid listeners to them. And Allāh is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:42-47, Pages 87-88.

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

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

Trouble Makers

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, behind in Medina to look after his family. The hypocrites spread lies about the reason why he stayed behind and claimed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left behind Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, as he disliked him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was distressed by this and then left Medina and caught up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and discussed this issue with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reassured him and asked him to return to Medina to take care of his family. He concluded that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was to him similar to how the Holy Prophet Harun, peace be upon him, was deputized by his brother the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. The obvious difference was that there would be no Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, after the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 7-8.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip whether it is true or not and it leads to problems between people, fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil as he always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a Muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance...”

A Muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the

Holy Quran a Muslim should not harbour any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

This same verse teaches Muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A Muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent.

Mocking Faith

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the journey, a hypocrite criticized the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and scoffed at his claim of Islam conquering Syria. Allah, the Exalted, informed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of this and when he questioned the hypocrite, he replied that they were only engaging in idle talk and joking. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 65-66:

“And if you ask them, they will surely say, “We were only conversing and playing.” Say, “Is it Allāh and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?” Make no excuse; you have disbelieved [i.e., rejected faith] after your belief. If We pardon one faction of you - We will punish another faction because they were criminals.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 9:65, Page 89.

Generally speaking, one can face the consequences mentioned in these verses when they fail to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

“...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

No Demand for Perfection

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. A few of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained behind after the departure of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of laziness. One of them was Abu Khaythama, may Allah be pleased with him. Several days after the army had departed, he returned home to find cool drinks and food prepared for him. He rebuked himself when remembering the difficulty the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was facing on this expedition while he was resting at home. He commanded his family to prepare for his departure and hurriedly caught up with the expedition which had setup camp at Tabuk. When Abu Khaythama, may Allah be pleased with him, reported to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the latter supplicated on his behalf. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 8-9.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

Excellence in Islam

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. During the expedition whenever anyone fell behind from the army, the people would inform the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would simply tell the informant to leave the absent person alone and if there was good in them then Allah, the Exalted, would inspire them to join the army otherwise the army had been relieved of that person. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 9.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as their occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

A Stranger

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. During the expedition, Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, lagged behind the army because of his slow camel. He took his belongings off the camel and walked to catch up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the army set up camp, the men saw Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, walking alone towards the camp. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, and commented that he walked alone, would die alone and would be resurrected alone. Years later, during the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with them, lived in a remote location and passed away there. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 245-246.

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, lived like a stranger and a traveler in this world.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised his Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to live in this world as a stranger or a traveller. And Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to advise that when a person reaches the evening they should not expect to be alive in the morning. And if they reach the morning they should not expect to be alive in the evening. And that a Muslim must make use of their good health before they encounter sickness and make good use of their life before their death.

This Hadith teaches Muslims to limit their hope for a long life which is the main cause of failing to prepare for the hereafter while dedicating one's complete effort to the material world as it convinces a Muslim they have plenty of time to prepare for the hereafter. In addition, a Muslim should not treat this temporary world as their permanent home. Instead, they should behave as someone who is about to depart it, never to return. This would inspire one to dedicate the majority of their efforts in preparing for their final destination namely, the hereafter, and to limit their efforts in obtaining the material world which is beyond their need and responsibilities. This concept has been discussed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for example chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 39:

“...this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.”

In a similar Hadith to the main one under discussion which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described himself in this world as a rider who takes

a short rest under the shade of a tree and then swiftly moves on. In order to indicate the temporal nature of this world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compared it to shade which, as everyone knows, does not last long even though it appears to be permanent. This is how the material world can appear to some. They behave as if the world will last forever whereas in reality it will quickly fade away.

In addition, this Hadith mentions a rider and not someone who is walking. This is because a rider would rest significantly less than someone journeying on foot. This further indicates that a person's stay in this world is very short. This is quite evident to all. Even those who reach elderly age admit their life went by in a flash. So in reality, whether one reaches old age or not life is just a moment. Chapter 79 An-Nazi'at, verse 46:

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

In reality, the material world is like a bridge which must be crossed and not taken as a permanent home. The same way a person does not take a bus station as their home knowing they stay there will only be for a short while similarly, the world is a short stop before one reaches the eternal hereafter.

When someone goes on a once in a lifetime holiday, in most cases, they will limit their spending on luxury household items, such as a wide screen television and instead make do with whatever services their hotel offers. They behave in this manner as they understand their stay in the hotel will

be short and soon they will leave never to return. This mentality prevents them from taking the holiday destination as their permanent home. Similarly, people were sent to Earth for a purpose which is definitely not to make it their permanent home. Instead, they were sent to take provisions from it so that they can safely reach their permanent home meaning, the hereafter.

Whenever a person intends to travel they first acquire the provision they need in order to make the journey comfortable and successful. As indicated in the Holy Quran the best provision for the hereafter is piety. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“...indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah...”

This is when a Muslim fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. Other provisions, such as food, are required in order to complete the journey from the world to the hereafter. But the provision which should be prioritised is piety as it is the only provision which will benefit someone in both this world and the next. Whereas, all the other types of provision, such as food, wealth and housing, will only benefit someone in this world unless, it is dedicated towards the hereafter, such as donating charity, but this in fact is a part of piety.

As the material world is not the permanent home of a person they should therefore act on the main Hadith under discussion and either live as if they were a stranger or a traveller.

The first state of being a stranger is someone who does not attach their heart and mind to their temporary home. Their only aim is to gather enough supplies so that they can return safely to their permanent home namely, the hereafter. This is like the one who lives in a foreign country on a work visa. Their place of work is not their home; only a place to earn money so that they can return back to their homeland with it. This person will never treat the strange country as their home. Instead, they only spend on necessary things and concentrate on saving their wealth so that they can take as much wealth as possible back to their real and permanent home. If this person spent all or the majority of their wealth in the foreign country and returned to their home country empty handed they would undoubtedly be considered blameworthy by their relatives. This is because they have failed in their mission and purpose of living in another country on a work visa. Similarly, a Muslim should dedicate the majority of their effort in acquiring provisions to take to the hereafter. They should not compete for the luxuries of the material world with others. Instead, they must concentrate on their mission to acquire provisions for the eternal hereafter. If they dedicate too much effort in beautifying their temporary home then they will enter the hereafter unprepared and empty handed and therefore, fail in their mission which Allah, the Exalted, entrusted them with. A Muslim should be honest with themselves and reflect on how many hours of the day they dedicate each to the material world and preparing for the hereafter. This self-reflection will show them if they have the correct mentality or not and how strong their faith in the hereafter really is. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent to mankind when they were the most lowly of people and the vast majority of them were leading a sinful life which would have caused them to enter Hell. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, called them towards the path of truth with clear proofs. Many of these people accepted his clear message and followed him. He promised them that Islam would conquer many nations and much wealth would be obtained by the Muslims. But he warned them not to become distracted by the luxuries of the material world. An example of this warning is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that competing for the unnecessary luxuries of the material world would destroy people. Therefore, he advised Muslims to content themselves with the basic necessities in order to fulfil their responsibilities and needs and instead concentrate on preparing for the hereafter. Everything the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, promised Muslims came true. When the world was opened to the Muslims the majority of them became busy with competing, collecting, hoarding and enjoying the excess of the material world. Thus, they gave up preparing for the hereafter correctly as they were told to by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Only a few accepted his advice and only took what they needed from the material world in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities and dedicated the majority of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter. This small party, meaning the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors, caught up with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter as they practically followed his advice and footsteps. On the other hand, the majority continued in their heedlessness chasing the material world until death caught them unprepared.

The second mentality Muslims should adopt as advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that of a traveller. This person does not observe this

material world as their home and instead journeys towards their true home meaning, the hereafter. This mentality is similar to a back packer who may sleep over in different cities but never regards them as their home. The only provision they take with them is what they can carry meaning, the essentials. This includes the things they need to survive and will help them reach their destination safely. A back packer would never pack unnecessary items knowing that these things will only be a burden for them. Nor will they fail to pack the essentials needed to complete their journey safely. Similarly, an intelligent Muslim only collects the deeds from this material world, in respect to actions and speech, which will help them reach the hereafter safely. They will turn away from all actions and speech which will become a burden for them in both this world and the next. This is the attitude the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4104. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

“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.”

A Muslim must understand that the day and night are only brief stages in which people travel through, stage by stage, until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, they should use each stage by sending ahead provision to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds. They must constantly be aware the journey will end very soon and they will reach the hereafter. Even if the journey looks long it will ultimately feel like a moment so one should make it a moment of obedience before it ends while they are unprepared. Chapter 79 An Naziyat, verse 46:

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

With every breath one takes they are moving towards the hereafter while leaving the world behind. Even though, one may seem not to be moving but in reality, the day and night act as their conveyance which takes them swiftly, without pause, to the next world.

Muslims must realise that as they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, soon a day will come when they will return to Him. When they return they will be stopped for questioning. Therefore, they should prepare something good for this interrogation. They should fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. But if they continue in heedlessness and fail to prepare then they will be taken to task for what has already occurred and for what remains.

Moving on to the advice of the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. The first part of it highlights the importance of shortening one's hope for a long life in this world. A Muslim should not believe they stay in this world is long as they could pass away at any moment. Even if one lives for many years life still seems to have gone by in a flash. This is what Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated by advising Muslims not to believe they will be alive in the morning if they reach the evening. This mentality is the root cause of only taking what one needs from the material world in order to fulfil their worldly responsibilities and prepare for the hereafter. Whereas, having hopes for a long life is the root cause of the opposite meaning, it causes one to delay preparing for the hereafter by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins and it encourages

them to collect and hoard the material world believing their stay in it will be extremely long.

In addition, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised Muslims to make good use of their good health before they encounter sickness. Unfortunately, most people only appreciate the value of good health after they lose it, which has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Making use of good health means that a Muslim should use their physical and mental strength in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins before they reach a time when they might desire to perform good deeds but can no longer do them due to poor health. The one who makes good use of their good health will be given the reward of the righteous deeds they performed during their good health even when they encounter sickness and can no longer do them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2996. Whereas, the one who does not make good use of their good health will lose this potential reward when they become sick. In fact, they will be left with nothing except regret.

The final part of the advice given by Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, is that a person should make good use of their life before death. This includes making use of all things which lead to righteous deeds, such as wealth, and avoiding all those things which prevent one from doing good deeds, such as unnecessary preoccupations. It is important for Muslims to make good use of their time before they become distracted with responsibilities which naturally occur with the passing of time, such as marriage. And to make good use of their wealth before their financial responsibilities increase.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2403, all people will have regrets at the time of their death. The good doer will regret that they did not perform more good deeds before dying. The sinful person will regret that they did not sincerely repent before their death. In this world people are often given second chances for example, redoing a driving test, but there is no do over once a person dies. Regret will not help them at all. Instead, it will only add to their pain and suffering. So Muslims must use the time they are given to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, before their moment ends by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should abandon the mentality of delaying things till tomorrow as in most cases this tomorrow never comes. A Muslim should concentrate on today and therefore, do the things which please Allah, the Exalted, as tomorrow may come in this world but they may not be alive to witness it.

Blind to the Truth

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. During the journey, the army suffered great hunger and thirst. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was requested to supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for aid. Before he lowered his hands from his supplication it began to rain and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, noted that it only rained on their camp and not beyond it. When a hypocrite was asked if he still desired more proof of Islam after this, he replied that it was only a passing cloud. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 10-11.

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.

Patience and Contentment

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. During the journey, the army suffered great hunger and thirst. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, requested permission to slaughter and eat their water-transport camels. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, granted them permission to do so but before they could, Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that this would lead to a shortage of transport. He advised the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to gather all the food available and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for blessings in it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, again agreed to this suggestion and miraculously a small amount of food filled all their containers and they all ate to satisfaction. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 11-12.

One of the things to note is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have easily suggested to supplicate instead of slaughtering their camels himself. One of the wisdoms behind his

behaviour is to teach the importance of contentment with the choices and decrees of Allah, the Exalted.

The difference between patience and contentment is that the one who is patient does not complain about a situation but desires and even supplicates for the situation to change. Whereas, the one who is content prefers the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over their own choice and therefore does not desire things to change. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have easily supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, instead of giving permission to slaughter the camels. But he did not desire to potentially contradict the will of Allah, the Exalted, as Allah, the Exalted, may have wanted him to remain content. Even though a supplication would have been lawful yet he desired to perfect servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore remained silent trusting in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Only after being requested to do so did he supplicate. The lesson to learn is that even though some situations appear and feel distressing in the long run the things which occur are better for a Muslim than what they desire even if they do not immediately observe the wisdom behind them. Perhaps experiencing a difficulty may well be the reason a Muslim is admitted into Paradise. So it is important to at least be patient if one cannot be content with the decree of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you...”

A Muslim should also remember that the one who chose the situation for them namely, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can take them safely out of it. This is only achieved through obedience to Him by fulfilling His

commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

Being Observant

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the journey, the expedition passed through the old desolate dwellings of a very powerful ancient nation, Thamud. Their persistent disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, and ultimate destruction has been discussed throughout Islamic teachings. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the army not to enter the desolate homes of those who harmed themselves unless they do so while weeping otherwise they may be struck with the punishment that affected Thamud. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 12.

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

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

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

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

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

Questions

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the journey, the expedition passed through the old desolate dwellings of a very powerful ancient nation, Thamud. Their persistent disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, and ultimate destruction has been discussed throughout Islamic teachings. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that people should not ask for signs (miracles) as the nation of Thamud did. Thamud then disbelieved after signs were given to them and thus they were destroyed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 13.

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.

Angry for Allah (SWT)

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the journey a Companion, Umarah Ibn Hazm, may Allah be pleased with him, was unknowingly sharing his ride with a hypocrite, Zayd Ibn Lusayt. When the army setup up camp, the camel of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, went missing and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went out searching for it. While resting in his camp, Zayd, mocked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by commenting that he claimed that he received news from the Heavens yet did not know where his camel was. At the same time, Umarah, may Allah be pleased with him, was with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when he was divinely informed of what Zayd said. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that he did receive news from the Heavens, including the whereabouts of his lost camel. He then directed the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to retrieve it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention that Zayd made that comment about him. When Umarah, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to his camp, he mentioned what occurred and was told Zayd was the one who spoke those words. Umarah, may Allah be pleased with him, seized Zayd and expelled him from his camp. This has been discussed in Sirat Ibn Hisham, Pages 244-245.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a Muslim's faith.

One of these characteristics is hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Prophetic Sermon at Tabuk

A Comprehensive Advice

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the expedition reached Tabuk, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the following speech: "People, the most truthful speech is that of the Book of Allah, the Exalted. The firmest of bonds is the word (testification of faith). The best of religions is that of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. The best of ways of life is the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The most noble of speech is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The finest of narratives is the Holy Quran. The best of practices are those sanctioned by Allah, the Exalted. The worse of practices are those innovated. The best guidance is that of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The most noble of deaths is being killed as a martyr. The most blind thing of all is going astray after guidance. The best of deeds are those that are beneficial. The best guidance is that which is followed (not innovated). The worse blindness is that of the (spiritual) heart. The upper hand (giving charity) is better than the lower hand (the one who receives charity). That which is little yet suffices is better than that which is much but wasteful. The worse apology is when death is at hand. The worse repentance is on Judgement Day. There are those people who only attend the Friday prayers at its end. There are those people who only mention Allah, the Exalted, in vain. The worse of sins is a lying tongue. The best riches are

those of the soul (contentment). The best of qualities is piety. The pinnacle of wisdom is the fear of Allah, the Exalted. The best quality within the heart is that of certainty (of faith). Doubting is from disbelief. Wailing in mourning is an act from the age of ignorance (pre-Islamic era). Fraud is of the soil spread in Hell. (Most) Poetry comes from Satan. Wine is the aggregate of sin. Women (for men and men for women) are the snares of Satan. Youth is an offshoot of madness (due to lack of control). The worse income is from interest. The worse food is consuming the wealth of orphans. The happy man is he who is warned by (the actions of) others. One of you has only to move four arm lengths away for the matter (death) to lead on to the hereafter. The fundamental of an action is determined by its results. The worse of narratives are those of untruth. All that is to come is near at hand. To swear at a believer is an outrage. To fight a believer is disbelief. To eat his flesh (backbiting) is disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. The sanctity of his property is as the sanctity of his blood. Whoever takes an (false) oath by Allah, the Exalted, gives the lie to Him. Whoever seeks His forgiveness shall be forgiven. Whoever gives pardon, Allah, the Exalted, will pardon. Whoever suppresses anger, Allah, the Exalted, will reward. Whoever remains firm against calamity, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate. He who desires fame, Allah, the Exalted, will discredit. He who remains firm, Allah, the Exalted, will doubly reward. He who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will punish. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. I seek forgiveness for myself and for you.” This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 16-17.

A Blessed Grave

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the expedition, a Companion, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that he once got up in the middle of the night and noticed a light. When he went over to it to investigate, he found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr Siddique and Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, digging a grave for a Companion, Dhu Al Bijadayn, may Allah be pleased with him, who had passed away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was in the grave while Abu Bakr and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, lowered the body of Dhu Al Bijadayn, may Allah be pleased with him, into the grave. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, positioned his body correctly in the grave, he asked Allah, the Exalted, to be pleased with him just like he was pleased with him. After witnessing this event, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, would often say that he wished that was his grave. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 22-23.

Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss the grave which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable Muslims must prepare for it as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their

grave. The only way to prepare for it is through piety which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of Muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things which Muslims give priority to will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a Muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds to pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and only obtain the wealth they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of their family or wealth as this will only lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave.

Victory is in Obedience

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Muslim army reached Tabuk, the Byzantine army were too afraid to fight and instead retreated further into their territory. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, remained there for some days and then returned back to Medina. Even though no fighting took place, yet this outcome caused the awe and fear of the Muslims to become further entrenched into the hearts of their enemies and encouraged many non-Muslims to accept Islam, as they recognized that it could not be overcome. In fact, many tribes which lived on the border of the Byzantine empire and had allied themselves with them, switched allegiance to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 429-430.

Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themselves which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Hypocrites Try to Assassinate Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Forgiveness Against Evil

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. While returning from this expedition, a group of hypocrites attempted to assassinate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Two of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while they were travelling on a narrow steep ridge. The hypocrites concealed their faces and attempted to push the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, off the ridge but were driven away by the two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was divinely informed of their evil plan and their names. He did not punish the hypocrites and instead covered their grievous sin. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 23-24.

In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 74:

“They swear by Allāh that they did not say [anything against the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] while they had said the word of disbelief and disbelieved after their [pretense of] Islām and planned that which they were not to attain...”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 9:74, Pages 89-90.

A Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 *Al Baqarah*, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

The Mosque for Causing Harm

A Foundation Built on Evil

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. While returning from this expedition Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to destroy a building which the hypocrites had constructed near Quba. They called it a Mosque while their intention was to build a base where they could meet and plot against Islam while feeling secure from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They desired to create division within the community of Quba in order to turn the local Muslims away from Islam. The leader of this plan was an evil man named Abu Amir who rejected Islam and migrated to Mecca where he incited them to war. When this failed he traveled to the Byzantine king and encouraged him to attack the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also. These hypocrites desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to bless the building by praying inside it. This action would have encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to also pray inside it thereby giving the hypocrites an opportunity to misguide them. Allah, the Exalted, forbade the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from standing inside it and instead commanded him to destroy the building. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 107-110:

“And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, “We intended only the best.” And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand [for prayer] within it - ever...And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 26-27.

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

The Best Places

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. While returning from this expedition Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to destroy a building which the hypocrites had constructed near Quba. They called it a Mosque while their intention was to build a base where they could meet and plot against Islam while feeling secure from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They desired to create division within the community of Quba in order to turn the local Muslims away from Islam. The leader of this plan was an evil man named Abu Amir who rejected Islam and migrated to Mecca where he incited them to war. When this failed he traveled to the Byzantine king and encouraged him to attack the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also. These hypocrites desired the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to bless the building by praying inside it. This action would have encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to also pray inside it thereby giving the hypocrites an opportunity to misguide them. Allah, the Exalted, forbade the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from standing inside it and instead commanded him to destroy the building. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, encouraged the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and indirectly all Muslims, to occupy the true Houses of Allah, the Exalted, the Mosques, which were founded on piety meaning, the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 107-110:

“And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, “We intended only the best.” And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand [for prayer] within it - ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves... And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 26-27.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey

Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

Use Your Means

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. While returning from this expedition and approaching Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that there were people who stayed in Medina during the expedition but were counted as those who were with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who took part in the expedition as they had valid excuses for not joining them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 28.

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 their intention and what they do, 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.

Gentle Behaviour is Best

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 30.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at

work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

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

Therefore, a Muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

Accepting Outward Behaviour Positively

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 30.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This

often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

Companions (RA) who Failed to Join the Battle of Tabuk

Obedience to the Prophet (PBUH)

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. One Companion, Ka'b Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, only stayed behind out of negligence and laziness. Even though he observed others making excuses and being pardoned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he still declared the truth to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knowing that Allah, the Exalted, would be angered at him for lying, even if he temporarily escaped the anger of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by lying. Two other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also admitted the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, would decide the outcome of their situation. The people of Medina were told to socially boycott the three until the decision about them was made. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 31-32.

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the people to socially boycott the three men, none of their beloved friends and relatives spoke to them. This might sound harsh, yet it was necessary to send a clear message to all Muslims to avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and it was part of the test these three Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, had to face. The people's response to the command indicates the great love and sincerity they possessed for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “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.

Obedience on the Edge

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. One Companion, Ka'b Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, only stayed behind out of negligence and laziness. Even though he observed others making excuses and being pardoned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he still declared the truth to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knowing that Allah, the Exalted, would be angered at him for lying, even if he temporarily escaped the anger of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by lying. Two other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also admitted the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, would decide the outcome of their situation. The people of Medina were told to socially boycott the three until the decision about them was made. During this time, a non-Muslim ruler sent a letter to Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, advising him that he was being treated harshly and he should leave Medina and come to him where he would be treated with great honor and respect. Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that this was a test and burned the letter. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 31-32.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why they worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience

they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

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

Truth Leads to Success

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. One Companion, Ka'b Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, only stayed behind out of negligence and laziness. Even though he observed others making excuses and being pardoned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he still declared the truth to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knowing that Allah, the Exalted, would be angered at him for lying, even if he temporarily escaped the anger of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by lying. Two other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also admitted the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, would decide the outcome of their situation. The people of Medina were told to socially boycott the three until the decision about them was made. After 50 difficult days, Allah, the Exalted, revealed their forgiveness in the Holy Quran, a very special blessing for them in particular, for adhering to the truth. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 118:

“And [He also forgave] the three who were left alone [i.e., boycotted, regretting their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite

of its vastness and their souls confined [i.e., anguished] them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 30-33.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the

sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

Balanced Spending According to Means

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. One Companion, Ka'b Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, only stayed behind out of negligence and laziness. Even though he observed others making excuses and being pardoned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he still declared the truth to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knowing that Allah, the Exalted, would be angered at him for lying, even if he temporarily escaped the anger of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by lying. Two other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also admitted the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, would decide the outcome of their situation. The people of Medina were told to socially boycott the three until the decision about them was made. After 50 difficult days, Allah, the Exalted, revealed their forgiveness in the Holy Quran, a very special blessing for them in particular, for adhering to the truth. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 118:

“And [He also forgave] the three who were left alone [i.e., boycotted, regretting their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite

of its vastness and their souls confined [i.e., anguished] them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, then visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who, with the rest of Medina, congratulated him. Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, offered all his wealth in charity out of gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him that it was best if he only donated some and kept the rest. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 30-33.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the one who spends in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded according to what they give. And he warned not to hoard otherwise Allah, the Exalted, will withhold His blessings.

It is important to note, that one must only obtain and spend lawful wealth as any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, this spending is not only through charity but includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents

according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. A Muslim should spend in a balanced way whereby they help others without becoming needy themselves. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 29:

“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.”

A Muslim should donate regularly according to their means even if it is a little as Allah, the Exalted, observes one's quality meaning, their sincerity, not the quantity of a deed. Regularly donating a little is far better and more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than donating a larger amount once in a while. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465.

It is important to note, as mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion when one gives according to their means Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to His infinite status. But the one who holds back will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim hoards their wealth they will leave it behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. If they misuse their wealth it will become a curse and burden for them in this world and a punishment in the next.

Obtaining Forgiveness

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Medina, those who failed to take part in the expedition came to him repeating their excuses and declaring their allegiance to him. He accepted all their excuses and supplicated on their behalf and left their hidden intentions between them and Allah, the Exalted. Seven Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who remained behind out of negligence, did not present excuses and instead tied themselves to the pillars of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in an act of repentance. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, saw what they had done he left their decision to Allah, the Exalted. Eventually, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 102, which indicated the acceptance of their repentance:

“And [there are] others who have acknowledged their sins. They had mixed [i.e., polluted] a righteous deed with another that was bad. Perhaps Allah will turn to them in forgiveness. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 34.

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

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

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

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

One of the greatest supplications a Muslim can make is for forgiveness as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world

and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything to Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when

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

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

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

Grieving

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, his eighteen month old son, Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, died. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 436.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. They are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Thaqif Tribe Accepts Islam

Compromising Leads to Failure

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. One of these conditions was that they desired to keep one of their idols of worship for three years within their land. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing be upon him, blankly refused this condition even though they kept reducing the time period. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 38-39.

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

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

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

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

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

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many

celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

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

The Prayers Lead to Paradise

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. One of these conditions was that they would be excused from offering the five daily obligatory prayers. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that there was no good in faith which is devoid of the prayers. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 39.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most

beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.

A Secure Home and Society

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. One of these conditions was that they would be allowed to fornicate. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that fornication was something Allah, the Exalted, made unlawful. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 39 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 1899.

Allah, the Exalted, encourages marriage and forbids illegal relationships for the same reason. When a couple are not truly devoted to each other like a married couple then any real difficulties they face will lead to more emotional stress for the couple as they fail to support each other correctly. In addition, any children that are born unintentionally from the relationship will put further stress on their relationship which often results in them splitting up as they do not desire to share the responsibility of raising a child. This creates a broken home for the child to grow up in where they do not have the support and supervision of both parents, which often leads to the trouble mentioned earlier. Raising a child correctly when one desires a child is extremely hard, then can one imagine the emotional stress of raising a child correctly when the parent did not desire to have the child in the first place? This negatively effects the upbringing of the child and often leads to the problems mentioned earlier. This stress often leads to the single parent giving up the child for fostering or adoption, which in the majority of cases has a detrimental negative and long term impact on the child. This further increases the chances of the child

becoming misguided. Allah, the Exalted, removed these branch problems by addressing the root problem meaning, forbidding illegal relationships and encouraging marriage whereby both couples sincerely devote themselves to each other and their children.

By addressing the concept of marriage, divorce and children in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to a successful society. When the members of the family, whether together or divorced, fulfill each other's rights and create a stable and happy home for the children it causes a positive ripple effect throughout society. Similarly, when a family is unhappy and fail to fulfill each other's rights then this causes a negative ripple effect to spread throughout society.

Many thinkers have come and gone which have addressed the issues people and society face but as these solutions target branch issues the benefit of these solutions are minimal. Whereas, Allah, the Exalted, through this method of addressing root issues, which affect an individual and the society, has clarified all things so that people can achieve success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"...And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy..."

Avoiding Usury

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. One of these conditions was that they would be allowed to practice usury (financial interest). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that usury was unlawful. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 39 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1899-1900.

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest

works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their 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 lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Mother of Evil

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. One of these conditions was that they would be allowed to consume alcohol. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that alcohol was made unlawful by Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 39 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Page 1900.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a Muslim must never consume alcohol as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the Muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies, which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person namely, their body, mind and soul. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. Yet, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises Muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed from ten different ways in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. These include the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who deals with

something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

Flexibility without Compromise

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. But their acceptance of Islam included some conditions which they expected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to accept. Two of these conditions were that their tribe would not be required to take part in battles and no person from a different tribe would be put in charge of their tribe. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted these two conditions. He did however comment afterwards that once they became true Muslims they would undoubtedly take part in battles out of their own free will. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 39.

These two conditions were accepted as they were not so significant nor did they challenge the fundamental teachings of Islam. In addition, accepting some of their conditions was the best way of encouraging them to accept Islam.

Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of

peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

True Good

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. After they accepted Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed one of their tribesmen as their commander, Uthman Bin Abu Al As, may Allah be pleased with him. He did this even though he was one of the youngest men, as he showed a great eagerness to understand the Holy Quran. He eventually became an expert in the Holy Quran and was much liked by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 40.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where

good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

A Good Leader

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. After they accepted Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed one of their tribesmen as their commander, Uthman Bin Abu Al As, may Allah be pleased with him. He did this even though he was one of the youngest men as he showed a great eagerness to understand the Holy Quran. He eventually became an expert in the Holy Quran and was much liked by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When departing Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, to be concise in the prayer and to evaluate the people by their weakest member for they would include the old, the young, the weak and those in need. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 40.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Make Things Simple

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. After they accepted Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed one of their tribesmen as their commander, Uthman Bin Abu Al As, may Allah be pleased with him. He did this even though he was one of the youngest men as he showed a great eagerness to understand the Holy Quran. He eventually became an expert in the Holy Quran and was much liked by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When departing Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, to recite the shorter chapters of the Holy Quran when he led the congregational prayers in order to make things easy for the people. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 40.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6125, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to make things easy for others instead of making things difficult. And to give glad tidings to others and not scare them.

A Muslim should always make things easy firstly for themselves by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy lawful

things without being wasteful or extravagant. A Muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not over burden themselves as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, Muslims should make things easy for others especially, in religious matters so that people do not grow averse to Islam believing it is a burdensome religion when it in fact is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a Muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a Muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfill the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a Muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfill the rights of others but

it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without trouble especially if they child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A Muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on Muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed should a Muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And

whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced a Muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

Forgive and Forget

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. Wahshi, the man who killed Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, at the Battle of Uhud, joined this delegation in order to secure his safety and accept Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he reached Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked about what he had done to Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, and accepted his testification of faith but asked him if he could avoid unnecessarily meeting him in the future, as seeing him reminded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the killing and mutilation of his uncle, Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4072.

Even though Wahshi's sins were forgiven, as he accepted Islam, yet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requested him to avoid meeting him unnecessarily. First of all, this indicates the human nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He felt the same feelings that any other human would feel, such as anger and grief. In addition, this request was a great relief for the Muslim community as it made things easier for the Muslims. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, behaved as if Wahshi had done nothing, then it would have forced all the Muslims to behave in this manner, as adopting the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is obligatory. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

The vast majority of Muslims would not be able to deal with others in such a manner. Therefore, the request of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made things easy for them. This corrects the false notion of forgiving and forgetting. This incident proves that humans are not computers, who can erase memories from their minds. People are not expected to forget the actions of others, they are instead encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and continue to fulfill the rights of others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice. Meaning, a Muslim should forgive others and fulfill their rights, but they should not blindly trust others, especially when they have been wronged by them in the past. Ignoring the past actions of others may well encourage them to behave in the same way in the future. Therefore, Muslims must learn from this incident and learn to forgive others and strive to fulfil their rights but they are not expected to forget the actions of others nor blindly trust them.

Hoping in Mercy

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. Wahshi, the man who killed Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, at the Battle of Uhud, joined this delegation in order to secure his safety and accept Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4072.

When he reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he asked him whether Allah, the Exalted, would accept his repentance even though he associated things with Allah, the Exalted, unlawfully killed people and committed adultery. In response, Allah, the Exalted, chapter 25 Al Furqan, verses 68-70:

“And those who do not invoke with Allāh another deity or kill the soul which Allāh has forbidden [to be killed], except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty. Multiplied for him is the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein humiliated. Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allāh will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allāh Forgiving and Merciful.”

Wahshi observed that the repentance would only be accepted if he continued to do righteous work. In response, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 48:

“Indeed, Allāh does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allāh has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin.”

Wahshi commented that this sets the condition of forgiveness to the will of Allah, the Exalted, and what if he was excluded from it. In response, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 53:

“Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.””

After hearing this verse, he accepted Islam.

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 25:68-70, Pages 122-123.

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.”

Leaving Things

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Bali visited Medina and accepted Islam. Their chief, Abu Ad Dabeeb, may Allah be pleased with him, asked a series of questions to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of them was about what to do regarding a stray camel someone happens to find. The latter responded that the lost camel was none of his business and he should let the owner try to find it instead of taking it for himself. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 446.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of minding one's business.

In a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things

that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them according to the teachings of Islam solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a Muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as they occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Death of the Chief of the Hypocrites

Persistence

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regularly visited him during his final illness in the hope he would sincerely repent and become a true Muslim. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 45.

The one who desires to spread the word of Islam should strive to frequently remind others of good. People can become heedless quickly therefore, reminding them consistently is important. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 51:

“And We have [repeatedly] conveyed to them the word [i.e., the Qur’ān] that they might be reminded.”

Just like students who revise their notes repeatedly in order to reinforce its knowledge into their minds one will benefit from being frequently reminded of the true word of Islam. One should not just offer good advice once and then give up. Repeating good words is like continuous drops of

water which with time penetrates the toughest of structures. This is the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, and all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command Muslims to establish the obligatory prayers once yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran.

The Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, spent approximately 950 years continuously spreading the word of faith to his people. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 14:

“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used every moment to spread the word of Islam and even in his last moments advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, to adhere to Islamic teachings. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2697. Therefore, one should adopt this attitude and not fall prey to the whisperings of the Devil by giving up offering advice after a few occasions. The duty of a Muslim who invites others to Islam is to do it consistently but whether this effects the hearts of the people is out of their control.

But it is important to stress there is a difference between being regular and hounding others. A Muslim should not constantly command others to good as this can become overbearing and burdensome for others. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

refrained from giving too many lectures as he did not want the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, becoming bored and overburdened. This is why the Companion, Abdullah Bin Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, only gave lectures on Thursdays even though he was requested to give more. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7127.

Show Gratitude to All

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regularly visited him during his final illness in the hope he would sincerely repent and become a true Muslim. He however did not repent and died a hypocrite. His son Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with him, requested the shirt of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so he could wrap his father's body with it. In addition, he requested him to lead the funeral prayer for his father. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave his shirt and rose to lead the funeral prayer. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not only fulfill the wish of his son, Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who was a sincere Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, but he also reciprocated the favor of Abdullah Bin Ubayy when he gave his shirt to the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abbas Bin Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, after the Battle of Badr, as no other shirt would fit him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 46-47.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted,

sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, Muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a Muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Mercy Leads to Success

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regularly visited him during his final illness in the hope he would sincerely repent and become a true Muslim. He however did not repent and died a hypocrite. His son Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with him, requested the shirt of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so he could wrap his father's body with it. In addition, he requested him to lead the funeral prayer for his father. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave his shirt and rose to lead the funeral prayer. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, took hold of his gown and urged him not to lead the funeral prayer of the man who stopped at nothing in trying to destroy Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, even reminded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the verse which clearly states that even if he sought forgiveness for the hypocrites seventy times Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive them. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 80:

“Ask forgiveness for them, [O Muḥammad], or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times - never will Allah forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would seek forgiveness for him more than seventy times. He then

led his funeral prayer. Allah, the Exalted, then forbade him from doing this in the future. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 84:

“And do not pray [the funeral prayer, O Muḥammad], over any of them who has died - ever - or stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were defiantly disobedient.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 46-47.

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.

Purifying the Holy Pilgrimage

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to announce that only a Muslim could take part in the Holy Pilgrimage after that year. Previous to this, non-Muslims would perform the Holy Pilgrimage but according to their own misguided customs. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 48-49.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final

journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

Do Not Fear Poverty

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, decreed that the polytheists should not enter the sacred area around the House of Allah, the Exalted, in Mecca, the Kaaba, during the Holy Pilgrimage or at other times. Some people of Mecca became worried as they relied on the Muslim and non-Muslim pilgrims for trading during the Pilgrimage season. But Allah, the Exalted, promised to provide for them in all situations. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 28:

“O you who have believed, indeed the polytheists are [spiritually] unclean, so let them not approach al-Masjid al-Ḥarām after this, their [final] year. And if you fear privation, Allah will enrich you from His bounty if He wills...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 1.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a Muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over instead they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

Truthful in Sincerity

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to announce that only a Muslim could take part in the Holy Pilgrimage after that year. Previous to this non-Muslims would perform the Holy Pilgrimage but according to their own misguided customs. Prior to this announcement and in that year the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge of the Holy Pilgrimage. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 48-49 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq, Pages 150-151.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, to join the pilgrims in order to make this announcement public. When Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, met him, he immediately enquired whether he was sent to take over the leadership from him or to deliver a message. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he was only sent as a messenger. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2996.

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, had no issues with being replaced as he was sincere to Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, he was not interested in leadership rather, he only desired to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This sincerity is the essence of faith.

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, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran and to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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.

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, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Be a Good Guest

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These people hurried over and called out to him in a loud and rude manner from behind his apartment. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verses 4-5:

“Indeed, those who call you from behind the chambers - most of them do not use reason. And if they had been patient until you [could] come out to them, it would have been better for them. But Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 60.

It is important for a Muslim to fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting others according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain their reward. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the host and their relatives. In this day and age it is easy to contact the host and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the

Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many Muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

Two Blessed Qualities

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Having reached and seen the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all except one man jumped down from their mounts and proceeded to him in haste. The man who remained behind, Ashajj Mundhir Bin Amir, may Allah be pleased with him, dismounted and tied his camel. He then took out and put on two white garments which he kept in his baggage. He then tied up the camels of the other delegates and then moved forward to meet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that he had two qualities which Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, loved namely, discernment and deliberation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 63.

True discernment can only be obtained through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important for Muslims to understand that their worldly knowledge irrespective of how much they possess is not enough to gain success in their religious life. Even though, gaining useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy according to the teachings of Islam as it is an excellent means for one to obtain lawful provision for themselves and their dependents yet, it is not enough to safely guide them through their religious life. For example, in most cases, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to safely journey through a difficulty or a test in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward in both worlds. The obligatory duties and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cannot be acted on by a Muslim who only possesses worldly knowledge. In fact, religious knowledge has the power to guide one to success in both worlds whereas worldly knowledge will

only aid someone in this world. The one who possesses religious knowledge will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which will result in such blessings and grace that they will find success in both worlds. Whereas, worldly knowledge will inspire one to deduce their own path in religion instead of acting according to the teachings of the rightly guided namely, the righteous predecessors. Religion is not to about creating one's own path it is simply to adhere to Islamic teachings.

Unfortunately, many Muslims who possess worldly knowledge do not realise this important point which only reduces their chances of achieving success in both worlds. Therefore, Muslims should strive to obtain and act on both religious and useful worldly knowledge if they desire success in both worlds. This is why gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, deliberation is extremely important as it prevents sins. In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Musaylima, the Liar

Aiming for Worldly Gain

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Amongst them was Musaylima, the liar, who after arriving in Medina said he would only follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, if he was appointed leader of the Islamic nation after him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned in a dream that Musaylima, the liar, would eventually falsely claim Prophethood. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave him a stern warning instead of punishing him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 66.

When Musaylima, the liar, returned to Yamama, he eventually announced Prophethood and out of greed for worldly things, many of his people accepted him. He then wrote a letter to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informing him of his announcement and attempted to compromise with him. He stated that they would share in the matter of rulership. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent a letter back to him while quoting chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 128:

“...Indeed, the earth belongs to Allāh. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 452-454.

Musaylima, the liar, attempted to compose verses which matched the Holy Quran thereby trying to fool others into believing he too was receiving divine revelation. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 93:

“And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allāh or says, "It has been inspired to me," while nothing has been inspired to him, and one who says, "I will reveal [something] like what Allāh revealed." And if you could but see when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands, [saying], "Discharge your souls! Today you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation for what you used to say against Allāh other than the truth and [that] you were, toward His verses, being arrogant.””

His foolishness became more apparent to those who possessed common sense when he attempted this, as his composed poetry was based on pointless things that did not benefit anyone. He gained followers through blind loyalty and by promising them worldly things, such as wealth and authority. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, *The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq*, Page 480 and in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 6:93, Pages 77-78.

During his Caliphate, Abu Bakr dispatched Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with them, to confront Musaylima, the liar. Washee was the freed slave of Jubair Ibn Mut'am. During the Battle of Uhud, which occurred in the third year the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Washee assassinated the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Hamza Ibn Abdul Muttalib, may Allah be pleased with him. Years later, Washee accepted Islam and decided to join the expedition against Musaylima, the liar. He desired to kill the worse person on Earth to make up for killing the best person. During the battle, Washee launched a spear at Musaylima, the liar, and fatally wounded him. Another Companion, Abu Dujaanah, may Allah be pleased with him, then finished Musaylima, the liar, off. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4072.

Like Musaylima, the liar, a person can be encouraged to cross all lawful limits when they have extreme love for wealth and social status.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe

warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of wise person as a Muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth.

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past

nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true Muslim.

If a Muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated Muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains just like the main Hadith under discussion warns that this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This Muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain

status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

True Beauty

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The delegation consisted of two men who after reaching Medina changed their travelling clothes for expensive and extravagant clothes and also put on gold rings. When they greeted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he did not reply to them nor speak to them. The delegates then questioned the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who advised them to change back into their traveling clothes and take off their gold rings. When they did so and returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he replied to their greeting and spoke to them. He told them that when they first came to him in their extravagant clothes the Devil was with them so he ignored them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 72.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a Muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people which is not

possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, such as their dependents.

Christian Delegation Visits Medina

The Highest Status

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Christian delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They spent much time debating with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regarding their belief in the divinity of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him. They accused the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of insulting the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, by referring to him as the slave of Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that it was not shameful for him to be the slave of Allah, the Exalted. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 172:

“Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allāh, nor would the angels near [to Him]. And whoever disdains His worship and is arrogant - He will gather them to Himself all together.”

This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi’s, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 4:172, Page 65.

This 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 Eesa, peace be upon him, with it. This has been supported by many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 851, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, referred to himself as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, before declaring his Messengership. This is a clear lesson to all Muslims that if they desire ultimate success and the highest ranks in both worlds they must become true servants of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved by following in the footsteps of the greatest servant of Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Servanthood is not possible to achieve any other way. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

The Clear Truth

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Christian delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They spent much time debating with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regarding their belief in the divinity of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 59-61:

“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allāh is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was. The truth is from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters. Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you - say, “Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allāh upon the liars [among us].””

This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 450-452.

The Holy Quran has proven to the Christians that none of their reasons which gave rise to their belief in the divinity of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, were valid. The Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was a human being whom Allah, the Exalted, had created in a special and unique manner and granted him with the power to perform certain

miracles all in order to proof his Prophethood. Allah, the Exalted, saved the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, from being crucified and raised him to Himself. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine there would be no need to do this as a divine being does not experience death. As Allah, the Exalted, treats His servants according to His will how can this extraordinary treatment of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, justify the conclusion that he is divine?

In addition, the call of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the same as all the Holy Prophets, including the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon them all.

Finally, the Holy Quran even established that after the ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, the religion of his disciples remained the same namely, Islam, which is now supported and further clarified by the Holy Quran. But over time the Christians abandoned the teachings of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and instead introduced innovations to the religion he brought. But Allah, the Exalted, sent his final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to correct things and realign humanity onto the straight path pointed out by the previous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This was clear to the people of the book as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been described in their divine scriptures yet they still rejected them out of greed for wealth and the social status they obtained by compromising on their faith. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons...”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons...”

After discussing these issues with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Christian delegation from Najran still stubbornly rejected the truth. As a response to their stubbornness Allah, the Exalted, further refuted their belief by inviting them to a mutual gathering where both sides would invoke the curse of Allah, the Exalted, on the group which was lying. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, summoned his family, Ali Bin Abu Talib, his wife and the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Fatima, and their two sons, Hasan and Hussain, may Allah be pleased with them all. After witnessing this the Christian delegation refused to take part in this gathering as they full well knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was speaking the truth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if they had agreed to the mutual imprecation then fire would have rained down upon them. This has been discussed in Imam Wahidi's, *Asbab Al Nuzul*, 3:61, Page 33. Another Hadith quoted by Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Pages 179-180, warns that if they all supplicated for the curse of Allah, the Exalted, on the liars then they would not have found their property or families when they returned home.

When they refused to take part in this mutual imprecation it became clear to all that the priests and leaders of Christianity in Najran, whose dedication to their faith was very well known, followed beliefs they themselves were not fully confident in.

Slaves of the World

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the delegation left Medina, two brothers, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and Kurz in frustration rebuked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. Abu Haritha in response rebuked him. When Kurz asked about his response, Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been described in their divine scriptures. When Kurz asked him why he rejected Islam even though he knew it was the truth, Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. Kurz gave much thought to what Abu Haritha said and he eventually returned to Medina and accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

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

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

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

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

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

lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

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

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

Trustworthy

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This delegation from Najran requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to send a trustworthy person to them in order to answer their questions. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, desired to be this person but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose Abu Ubaida Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, and declared that he was the most trustworthy person in his nation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 71.

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

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

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

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

Evil Plans Backfire

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation from Banu Amir visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Three men came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with the intention to betray and martyr him. Amir Bin Tufayl planned to distract the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to give the opportunity to his evil friend, Al Arbad, to attack him. When Al Arbad failed to launch the attack Amir Bin Tufayl gave up the plot and instead verbally threatened the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who in turn asked Allah, the Exalted, to take care of Amir Bin Tufayl on his behalf. After the two left Medina, Amir rebuked Al Arbad for not launching the attack but he replied that every time he decided to attack he could only see Amir standing in front of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This was in fact nothing but divine protection. On the way home, Amir gained an infection his neck which ultimately led to his death. Al Arbad was eventually struck by lightning and died. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 13:

“And the thunder exalts [Allāh] with praise of Him - and the angels [as well] from fear of Him - and He sends thunderbolts and strikes therewith whom He wills while they dispute about Allāh; and He is severe in assault.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 66-80.

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

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

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

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

Noble Character Leads to Paradise

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a non-Muslim tribe was taken as prisoners of war and brought to Medina. The daughter of Hatim Al Tai was amongst them. When she saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, walk pass, she asked him to release her and spare her the malicious gloating of the Arab tribes, as she was the daughter of the leader of her people. She then mentioned some of her father's qualities: he was the guardian of their sacred objects, he relieved the distressed, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave generous hospitality, provided the best of food, he spread peace and never refused the request of the needy. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that this was indeed the description of a true believer even though Hatim Al Tai was not a Muslim. He then declared the release of his daughter and commented that her father was a man who loved noble character traits and Allah, the Exalted, loves noble character traits. He concluded that no one will enter Paradise except by noble character. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 92.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way

a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the Muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

True Honor in Humility

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a well-known Christian scholar, who eventually became a Muslim, Adi Bin Hatim, may Allah be pleased with him, prior to accepting Islam, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After meeting him, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took him to his home. On the way, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was stopped by an old disabled woman. He stood with her for a long time discussing and solving her problem. During this long conversation, Adi Bin Hatim, may Allah be pleased with him, told himself that this was not the behaviour of a worldly king. After reaching his home, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, insisted that Adi, may Allah be pleased with him, sit on a pillow while he himself sat on the floor. Adi, may Allah be pleased with him, again told himself that this was not the behaviour of a worldly king. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 87-88.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

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

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And

any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bears this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themselves if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themselves before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at

home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63, shows that humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly...”

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Rights of Muslims

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a man named Jarir Bin Abdullah Al Bajali visited Medina and accepted Islam. When accepting Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked him to pledge that he would perform the obligatory prayers, pay the obligatory charity and be loyal to all Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 106.

In this day and age, Muslims often give much attention to the first two things mentioned in this pledge namely, the obligatory prayers and the obligatory charity, but they often overlook being sincere and loyal to all Muslims. The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty with two pillars of Islam indicates how important it is to fulfill. Therefore, Muslims should always strive to uphold the ties to other Muslims. This applies to all Muslims whether they are related or not and if they know each other or not. Many rights of Muslims have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and each Muslim should strive to learn and fulfill them. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed five rights a Muslim owes another Muslim.

Firstly, they are to respond to the greeting of peace even if replying contradicts their desire. More importantly a Muslim must fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace practically by showing peace and kindness towards others through their speech and actions. This is the true meaning of the Islamic greeting of peace.

A Muslim should try to visit sick Muslims in order to provide them physical and psychological support. It would be difficult to visit all sick Muslims but if each Muslim at least visited their sick relatives then the vast majority of the sick would obtain this support. All forms of vain or sinful speech and actions must be avoided such as, gossiping otherwise a Muslim will only earn sins instead of blessings.

A Muslim when possible should attend the funeral of other Muslims as each attendee supplicates for the deceased to be forgiven. Therefore, the more Muslims in attendance the better. Just like one desires others to attend their funeral and supplicate for them they too should do this for others. In this particular deed is a good reminder for a Muslim that they too will eventually die. Hopefully, this will alter their behaviour for the better so that they better prepare for their own death by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should accept the invitation for meals and social events as long as no unlawful or disliked activities take place, which in this day and age is quite rare. An important point to note is that some Muslims attend social events where unlawful or disliked things occur and cite this Hadith to support their actions. One should not misinterpret the divine teachings in order to fulfil their own desires as this is clear misguidance and an invitation to divine punishment.

Finally, the main Hadith concludes by advising Muslims to supplicate for the Muslim who praises Allah, the Exalted, after they sneeze.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated an extremely important duty in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2714, which is to offer good and sincere advice to other Muslims.

Firstly, it is important to note good advice should be offered to all irrespective of their faith. This is clearly advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. Muslims should advise others the way they wish people to advise them. One should never let their ill feelings prevent them from fulfilling this duty as one who purposely offers bad advice will find that people give them incorrect advice. Offering sincere advice is so important that as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1925, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would take a pledge from people to fulfil this duty along with fulfilling the obligatory duties such as the prayer. The fact that sincerely advising others has been placed with these obligatory duties highlights its importance. So a Muslim should never overlook this fact.

Every person, irrespective of faith, loves to obtain the things which would benefit them and protect them from harmful things. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for other Muslims what they love for themselves. This should be shown through one's actions by striving to ensure others obtain those things they love for themselves by any means available to them. A Muslim should not merely claim this through their words.

Another right all Muslims have is that one should sincerely supplicate for them. This is an aspect of being merciful to each other which has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are...merciful among themselves...”

In fact, when a Muslim supplicates for another they themselves benefit from it. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6927, when a Muslim secretly supplicates for other Muslims an Angel supplicates for them.

Another important right is that a Muslim should love and hate for other Muslims what they love and hate for themselves. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made this a condition of sincere belief in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

A Muslim should be happy at the lawful joy of another Muslim and hope it lasts for them. They should get sad when another Muslim faces a difficulty and help them through it even if it is just a supplication on their behalf. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, that Muslims are like one body. If a part of the body is ill then the rest of the body shares in the pain.

A Muslim should never cause unjustified harm to another Muslim or non-Muslim through their words or actions as this is the very definition of a Muslim given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2627. In fact, keeping people safe from one's harm is an act of charity a person does to themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250. This is an act of charity to oneself as it protects them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted.

The rights of other Muslims include removing any obstacles from their path. This includes physical obstacles as well as figurative obstacles which can cause them harm. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6670, advises that a person will be granted Paradise for removing a tree which was blocking the path used by fellow Muslims.

It is the right of a Muslim that other Muslims help them when they are oppressed by any means necessary such as, financial help, and help those Muslims who commit oppression by warning them about the consequences of this behaviour. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6952. It is important to note, advice should only be given if the adviser is safe from the oppressor's harm.

A Muslim is not allowed to sever ties with another Muslim for more than three days over a worldly reason. This has been made clear in many Hadiths such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1932. Turning away from another Muslim in such a manner is such a serious issue that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1740, that Allah,

the Exalted, forgives all Muslims every Monday and Thursday except those who have forsaken another Muslim until they reconcile.

Another right is that a Muslim should not behave arrogantly with other Muslims. Instead, they should demonstrate humility which always leads to affection and the spread of love within society. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4895. Conversely, arrogance and pride only lead to social barriers and segregation of societies. If a Muslim is treated with arrogance they should not reply in the same manner instead they should hold to patience and forgiveness.

In fact, being humble towards others irrespective of their social status is a characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1415, he would never dislike walking with the poor and needy in order to fulfil their needs.

It is important for a Muslim to never pay any attention to rumours or gossip about other Muslims as in most cases they are either completely untrue or contain a few facts mixed with a lot of fiction. In many cases, even the truth has been twisted out of context in order to fulfil someone's evil desires. A Muslim should disregard what has been said and advise the gossiper to sincerely repent. They should never repeat the gossip to others nor mention the gossiper to others. By concealing this they should hope Allah, the Exalted, will conceal their faults in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

In addition, a Muslim should never backbite or slander other Muslims as this is a major sin. In fact, one Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, warns that the tale bearer will not enter Paradise.

It is a duty of a Muslim to strive within their means to aid other Muslims from any distress. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225, that whoever does this will be relieved of a hardship on the Day of Judgment. The same Hadith advises that whoever relieves the financial burden of another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve them in both worlds. So Muslims should be kind towards those who are indebted to them.

Another right a Muslim has over other Muslims is that if a Muslim wrongs another Muslim and then seeks forgiveness from them the victim should forgive them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in Allah, the Exalted, forgiving the victim of their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6592, that whoever forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed with more honour.

In addition, a Muslim should treat other Muslims according to their status which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1921. Meaning, elders should be treated with respect and the young with mercy. This Hadith warns that those who do not behave in this manner do not belong to the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 357, advises that a part of respecting Allah, the Exalted, is showing respect to the elderly. All people are a part of the creation of Allah, the Exalted, so respecting them according to the teachings of Islam is in fact respecting the Creator namely, Allah, the Exalted.

Islam teaches Muslims that what they give is what they shall receive. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2022, when a young person honours and respects an elderly person because of their age Allah, the Exalted, will appoint someone to honour them if and when they reach elderly age.

Another right a Muslim owes to other Muslims is to be cheerful with them as long as sins are avoided. In fact, smiling to another Muslim in order to comfort them is recorded as a charity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956.

The one who is easy to deal with, soft and mild mannered towards other Muslims has been given the glad tidings of protection from the fire of Hell in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2488. A part of being cheerful is speaking kindly to others. This is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7512, that this is a deed which protects one from the fire of Hell. In fact, a person who acts on this has

been promised a beautiful chamber in Paradise in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1984.

It is a duty on Muslims to correct the problems between other Muslims according to their capacity. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2509, that doing this is better than voluntary prayer, fasting or charity.

Another right a Muslim has over other Muslims is that one should conceal their faults. It has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930, that Allah, the Exalted, will cover the faults of a Muslim who conceals the faults of others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, warns that whoever exposes the faults of others will have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted. This does not mean a Muslim should ignore the sins of others. But it means they should gently and privately advise the sinner to sincerely repent and not mention their sin to others. Even if a Muslim desires to teach others not to commit a similar sin they should follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and advise others without naming people. An example of this is recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. A Muslim should therefore screen the defects of others just as Allah, the Exalted, screens their defects and the mistakes of all others.

A Muslim should always avoid any situation which causes suspicion and doubt in the mind of other Muslims. This is in order to protect them from sins which others who are suspicious might commit such as backbiting and slander. Extending this protection to other Muslims is a part of loving

good for them just as one loves good for themselves. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3101, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once met his wife during the night. At the same time two Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, walked by hurriedly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called and informed them he was meeting his wife and not a strange woman. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, made it clear that an incorrect thought did not even cross their minds. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only responded in this manner in order to teach all Muslims that one should clarify any activity which could be seen as suspicious in order to protect the thoughts of other Muslims.

This is connected to another pious characteristic. It is when one avoids doing things which are lawful in order to prevent other Muslims feeling bad. For example, a husband not publically showing affection to his wife in front of other Muslims, such as his sister. Even though, this is completely lawful but doing it in front of his sister might make her feel bad especially if her husband does not do things like that with her. This is a higher level of noble character which is not obligatory but a great virtue.

Another right Muslims have over other Muslims is that they should be greeted with the Islamic greeting of peace. This should include the Muslims one knows and those a Muslim does not know. Many Hadiths discuss the importance and virtue of doing this good deed. For example, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68, links spreading the greeting of peace to other Muslims to gaining entry into Paradise. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 86:

“And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]...”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2706, advises that a Muslim should extend the greeting of peace when they meet another Muslim and when they leave them.

It is important to note, the Islamic greeting of peace is an indication that a Muslim should not only welcome a Muslim with peaceful words but they must maintain kind words throughout every conversation. In addition, this spreading of peace should be shown through a Muslim's actions not just words. This is the true meaning of extending the Islamic greeting of peace to others.

A Muslim should also follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by shaking hands with other Muslims when they extend the greeting of peace to them. In fact, the Muslims who do this and avoid any sins during their conversation will have their minor sins forgiven before they separate. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5212.

It is a duty on all Muslims to defend the rights of other Muslims as much as they can without committing sins or harming themselves. For example, they should protect the honour of other Muslims which are often violated behind their backs in the form of backbiting and slander. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, that whoever protects

the honour of another Muslim will be protected from the fire of Hell on Judgment Day.

If another Muslim shows bad manners it is a duty on other Muslims to maintain good manners with them. In addition, they should advise them in private to change their character for the better. Doing so in public can lead to their embarrassment and it is a duty of a Muslim not to embarrass other Muslims. In addition, a person who is embarrassed will more likely become angered and they therefore are less likely to accept the good advice which has been given to them.

Letting Things Go

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a prince from Hadramawt in Yemen, Wa'il Bin Hujr, came to Medina and accepted Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then appointed him the commander of the other princes of Hadramawt and put him in charge of a specific territory. He dispatched the Companion, Mu'awiya Bin Abu Sufyan to accompany Wa'il home, may Allah be pleased with them. Mu'awiya had no camel to ride on and was forced to walk alongside Wa'il, may Allah be pleased with them, while he rode his camel. He asked to ride behind Wa'il, may Allah be pleased with him, but he refused declaring that he was not fit enough to ride behind kings. Years later, Mu'awiya, may Allah be pleased with him, became the Caliph of Islam and when Wa'il, may Allah pleased with him, visited him he honored him greatly and jokingly reminded him of what he said to him during that journey. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 108.

All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very

sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Sincerity in Leadership

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a family complained to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about a governor he appointed over them. They accused the governor of behaving negatively towards them as they had problems with each other prior to the coming of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commented that there was no material worldly benefit in having command for a true believer. Meaning, a true believer would not take advantage of their position of authority for worldly reasons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 113.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to

push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.¹ So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

The Independent

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that those who unnecessarily beg from others are an ache in the head and a pain in the stomach. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 113.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who is independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The Love of Allah (SWT) and People

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a non-Muslim delegation visited Medina. A man amongst them, Abdul Rahman Bin Abu Aqil, commented that prior to visiting Medina, they hated no one more than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but after meeting him, they loved no one more than they loved him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 116.

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

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

Intercession

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited Medina in order to accept Islam. One of the men asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, why he had not asked Allah, the Exalted, for a physical kingdom like the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, asked for. Chapter 38 Sad, verse 35:

“He said, “My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.””

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed and replied that perhaps he was given a status by Allah, the Exalted, which is higher than the status of the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him. He added that Allah, the Exalted, granted a special supplication to every Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. Each one of them used their special supplication during their lives on Earth but he had reserved his supplication for the Day of Judgement when he will supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to allow him to intercede on behalf of his nation.

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 116.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A Muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some Muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not 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. These Muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact some Muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession 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.

Honesty in All Aspects of Life

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a man named Tariq Bin Abdullah and his companions visited Medina in order to purchase dates. When they reached Medina, a stranger greeted them and asked about their journey. The stranger then offered to buy their camel in exchange for dates. Tariq agreed to the sale and the stranger took the camel and told them he would bring the dates to them shortly. When the stranger walked beyond their gaze they began to suspect they had been conned. But a woman with them commented that they should not blame themselves as the stranger's face was more handsome than the full moon and he did not look like a deceiver. Moments later, the stranger reappeared and announced to them that he was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He then invited them to eat as many dates as they desired and to take the full measure they had earlier agreed to. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 117.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are

involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Story of the Anti-Christ

Dealing with Trials

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Companion named Tamim Al Dari, may Allah be pleased with him, visited Medina and told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about his strange journey. Tamim, may Allah be pleased with him, was travelling on a ship when it went off course. The crew ended up being cast upon an unknown island. They left the ship seeking drinking water and eventually came across a man who was bound in chains. The prisoner asked them who they were and they replied that they were Arabs. The prisoner asked them if a man had come forth proclaiming to be the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. They replied that this had occurred and people were believing in him, following him and considering him truthful. The prisoner commented that this was best for them. He then asked for news about Ayn Za'r a location in Hijaz. The men told him and the prisoner became overjoyed. The prisoner then asked if the date palms at Baysan, located in Al Yamama, were bearing fruits. The men replied that they were and he again became overjoyed. The prisoner finally commented that if he was allowed to do so he would travel the land except for the land of Tayba. After Tamim, may Allah be pleased with him, recounted this story the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the prisoner was the Anti-Christ and the land of Tayba was Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 119.

The trial of the Anti-Christ has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4077, as the greatest trial Muslims will face during their lives on Earth. Therefore, Muslims should learn some important lessons from this future event. The first is the importance of possessing strong faith. Only those who possess weak faith will be misguided by him. Strong faith is extremely important as it is a weapon against every trial or difficulty one faces during their life. The one who possesses strong faith will always, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, overcome every difficulty with reward and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, as they understand the behaviour they must demonstrate in each situation. Whereas, those who possess weak faith are easily misguided and put off from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by the tests and trials they face during their life just like the people of weak faith will be misguided by the Anti-Christ. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

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

The other thing to learn from this great event is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it similarly, a Muslim who is surrounded by temptations will

more likely be led astray. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them towards sins will protect their faith and honour. This advice has been given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children do the same.

Favoring Yourself

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation, the Banu Asad, visited Medina in order to accept Islam. Their commander made a comment which suggested that they were doing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a favor by accepting Islam. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 17:

“They consider it a favor to you that they have accepted Islam. Say, “Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, Allah has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.””

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 120.

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they obey Allah, the Exalted, such as treating others kindly it in reality benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found

in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a Muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”

Where Greatness Lies

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation came to Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave them large gifts. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked a youth among them what gift he wanted. The youth replied that he wanted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to forgive him, to grant him mercy and place wealth in his heart meaning, contentment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, fulfilled his request and the youth became one of the most pious and ascetic of men. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 127.

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

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

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

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

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

True Devotion

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a non-Muslim delegation came to Medina and accepted Islam. According to their former faith they were prohibited from eating a specific type of meat which was lawful in Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had this meat cooked and presented it to their leader and told him his faith would not be complete until he ate the food. The leader did eat the meat, even though he showed some hesitation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 127.

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.

True Belief

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited Medina after accepting Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them what they were. They replied that they were believers. He then replied that every truthful statement is supported by evidence and so what was the evidence of their statement and claim to faith. They replied that there were fifteen things that they acted upon. Five things the representatives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them to believe in. Five things that they were ordered to act upon and five things they themselves developed prior to accepting Islam which they would only leave if commanded so by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them to name these fifteen things. They replied that the five things they were commanded to believe in were to believe in Allah, the Exalted, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, peace be upon them, and the Day of Resurrection. The five things they were ordered to act upon were to verbally declare that there was none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, pray the obligatory prayers, to donate the obligatory charity, to fast in Ramadan and to perform the Holy Pilgrimage if one is able to. The last five things they themselves developed prior to accepting Islam were being thankful when prosperous, being forbearing in the face of difficulty, being pleased with whatever fate brings, being truthful at social gatherings and refraining from cursing enemies. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, greatly praised them after hearing this and then told them five more things they should act upon to make the total twenty. He told them not to accumulate what they would not use themselves, not to build what they would not inhabit, for them not to compete for something they will shortly leave behind in this world, to fear Allah, the Exalted, to Whom they will be returning to in the hereafter and Whom before they will be exposed and to strongly desire the place they were heading towards and will remain forever in namely, the hereafter.

The delegation then left Medina and acted on this advice thereby practically proving their faith. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 128.

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.

Greetings of Peace

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a Muslim delegation from Al Sadif visited Medina. They entered the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was on his pulpit giving a speech. They sat down without giving the Islamic greeting of peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them if they were Muslims to which they replied in the affirmative. He then asked whether they will give the Islamic greeting of peace. They arose and extended the Islamic greeting of peace to all. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 129.

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

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

A Muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

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

Choice Given to the Wives of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Favoring the Hereafter

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, things became easier for Islam after the conquest of certain lands. As a result, some of the wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired for him to make their worldly life more comfortable. They behaved in this manner as they desired to observe the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, live a comfortable life. They did not desire the pomp and glitter of the world as none of them accepted the offer Allah, the Exalted, revealed in chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verses 28-29:

“O Prophet, say to your wives, “If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release. But if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter - then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.””

This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Volume 7, Pages 672-675, and in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, Number 3690 and Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3204.

In addition, they only desired a little comfort as they were all living in extreme poverty. For example, often three months would pass without any of homes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, lighting a fire for the sake of cooking food. They would instead survive on dates and water. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 6459.

Therefore, Muslims must follow in their footsteps and prefer the hereafter and preparing for it over the luxuries of the material world.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, has only given one heart to each person. Therefore, two opposite things cannot be contained within it at the same time just like fire and ice cannot come together in one container. This is similar to how a traveller heading east will inevitably move further away from the west. Similarly, the hereafter and the material world are two opposites. They therefore cannot be contained at the same time in a single person's heart. The more one loves and practically strives for the excess of the material world the less they will love and practically strive for the hereafter. This is an unavoidable reality. A Muslim should not fool themselves into believing it is possible. The two can never come together in a single heart. One will always overcome the other. Even if one believes they can indulge in the lawful excess of this material world they should realise that first of all, this will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. Secondly, it will cause them to be that much closer to the unlawful as indulging in lawful things is usually the first step to the unlawful and sins. The one who avoids this mentality will protect their faith and honour. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The 10th Year After Migration

Overlooking and Pardoning

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited Medina after accepting Islam. This tribe consisted of men who had treated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a very harsh and rude manner during the pilgrimage seasons which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to attend inviting people to Islam, prior to migrating to Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, recognized one of those men who treated him in a rough way, yet did not criticize him at all. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 122.

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid a Muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on Muslims as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Finally, those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A Muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness and peace of mind in both worlds.

Overcoming Foes

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched a group who were led by Khalid Bin Walid, may Allah be pleased with him, to a non-Muslim tribe, the Banu Al Harith Bin Ka'b, to invite them towards Islam. They did accept Islam and a delegation from them then visited Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them how they persistently overcame their enemies prior to accepting Islam. They replied they achieved this by remaining united and by never initiating any injustice to anyone. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 135.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been

warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a

person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning

and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

In addition, this incident also mentions avoiding initiating injustice to anyone, as a characteristic of overcoming enemies.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they understand that their final outcome or the final outcome of others is unknown to them. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them. This reality should prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a Muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themselves if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

Dispatching Governors to Yemen

Under Your Authority

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Abu Musa Al Ashari, and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, to govern over two provinces of Yemen. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 135-136.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a Muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things such as wealth and internal things such as one's body. A Muslim must fulfill the responsibility

of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a Muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life such as relatives and friends. A Muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A Muslim must guide them by leading by example as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier and teach their children to do the same.

To conclude, according to this Hadith everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Ease and Glad Tidings

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Abu Musa and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, to govern over two provinces of Yemen. He advised them to be lenient, not harsh and to give glad tidings and not scare people. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 135-136.

A Muslim should always make things easy firstly for themselves by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy lawful things without being wasteful or extravagant. A Muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not overburden themselves as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, Muslims should make things easy for others especially, in religious matters so that people do not grow averse to Islam believing it is a burdensome religion when it in fact is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a Muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a Muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfil the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a Muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without trouble especially if their child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A Muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on Muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed should a Muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced a Muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

Help in Good

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Abu Musa and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, to govern over two provinces of Yemen. He advised them to cooperate with one another and not to be in conflict with one another. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 135-136.

Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the Muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet Muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the Muslim nation has only decreased as the number of Muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing

is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

The other thing connected to this is that many Muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

Muslims must reflect on this deeply, change their mentality and strive to aid others in good irrespective of who is doing it and not hold back fearing their support will cause them to be forgotten within society. Those who obey Allah, the Exalted, will never be forgotten in both this world and the next. In fact, their respect and honour will only grow in both worlds.

Avoid Darkness

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Abu Musa and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, to govern over two provinces of Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some commands to them. One of which was to fear the curse of the oppressed, as there is no barrier between them and Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 136.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed

by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

Prophetic Companionship

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, walked alongside his mount as he rode out of Medina. After giving some farewell advice to him, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that perhaps he would not meet him again after that year and Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, would next time pass by his grave. As a response to his comment, Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, wept out of love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 137.

Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, practically proved his desire to accompany the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in both worlds and if one desires this prophetic companionship then they must do the same.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him

as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to

follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Closest to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, walked alongside his mount as he rode out of Medina. After giving some farewell advice to him, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, turned towards Medina and declared that the people who are closest to him are the pious, whoever and wherever they maybe. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 137.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many Muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one Muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

A Muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Dealing with Allah (SWT) and People

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised him the following things: to fear Allah, the Exalted, wherever he may be, to follow up a sin with a good deed so that it erases the former and finally to treat people with good character. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 138.

The first mentioned is to fear Allah, the Exalted, through piety. This is achieved when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in fact encompasses all the teachings and duties of Islam. When one strives in this manner they will eventually reach the high level of faith called excellence. This is when one acts, such as performing the prayer, as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, observing them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This ensures one fulfils their duties both to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation.

The second advice given is that a Muslim should follow up a sin with a righteous deed so that it wipes out the sin. This refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance. If one adds sincere repentance to their righteous deed then it will erase any sin, minor or major. But a part of acting rightly is to strive not to repeat the sin again as sinning with the intention of following it up with a righteous deed is a dangerous misleading

mentality. One should strive not to commit sins and when they do occur to sincerely repent.

Finally, the last thing mentioned is to treat people with good character. This is extremely important as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003. One should adopt this by learning and acting on the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, will find that on Judgment Day their good deeds are given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them. This might cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Simply put, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they desire people to treat them.

A Luxurious Life

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. When he was leaving, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised him to beware of luxury as the servants of Allah, the Exalted, do not seek after luxury. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 138.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Using Knowledge Correctly

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. When leaving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked what he would do if he was brought a case to judge. Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he would judge according to the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in the Holy Quran. He then replied he would judge according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in his traditions. Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, finally replied that he would use independent reasoning meaning, a judgement which runs in line with the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praised Allah, the Exalted, for giving him a representative that pleased him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 140-141.

Whenever a scholar masters the different sciences of Islam they may reach a level called independent reasoning. This allows them to apply the teachings of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with their professional unbiased judgement in order to derive a ruling within Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when this scholar makes an incorrect ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over.

In addition, it is important to gain and act on knowledge with the correct intention. In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others such as a thorny tree. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases but the outcome is very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

Gaining Reward from All Things

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched Abu Musa and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, to govern over two provinces of Yemen. Once Mu'adh visited Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with them, and they began discussing good deeds such as reciting the Holy Quran. While mentioning his nightly routine, Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that he would sleep for the first part of the night then he would rise and recite the Holy Quran. He concluded that from this routine he hoped for reward from Allah, the Exalted, for both his sleeping and recitation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 136.

He expected this reward as his intention for sleeping was to give his body enough rest so that he could later wake up in the night in order to recite the Holy Quran. This pious intention caused him to gain reward for both his sleeping and recitation.

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.

Be Just

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. He mentioned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that as he was young and lacked knowledge how would he correctly judge the cases that were brought to him in Yemen. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed his hand on Ali's chest, may Allah be pleased with him, and supplicated for Allah, the Exalted, to make his tongue firm and guide his heart. He then advised him that if two rivals came to him for judgement he should not make a judgement until he heard from both sides. He concluded that behaving in this manner would make things clear to him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 147.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for Muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest as well as using

each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach Muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.¹ So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Be the Best

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen. Amongst them was a Companion, Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, who admitted that at the time he had ill feelings towards another Companion, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. After this expedition, the spoils of war needed to be distributed and so the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, for this task. After this occurred, Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and criticized Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, even though he did nothing wrong. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked Burayda if he disliked Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, to which he replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then told him not to dislike him and to instead increase the love he had for him as he was worthy of it. After this comment, Burayda, may Allah be pleased with him, sincerely declared that he loved no one more than he loved Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 142-143.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are the best group ever created after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The fact they physically observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime is definitely one factor. But anyone who knows about their life and their righteous deeds understands that their superiority is due to more than just this unique and great deed.

One of the main reasons for their superiority is shown in this event and in a Hadith involving the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, which is found in Sahih Muslim, number 6515. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once riding on his conveyance in the desert when he came across a Bedouin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted the Bedouin, placed his turban on the Bedouin's head and insisted that the Bedouin ride on his conveyance. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was told that the greeting he gave the Bedouin was more than enough as the Bedouin would have been greatly pleased at the fact that the great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with him, greeted him. Yet, Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and showed the Bedouin great respect. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he only did this because the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that one of the best ways a person can honour their parent is by showing love and respect to their parent's relatives and friends. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, added that the Bedouin's father was a friend of his father the Commander of the Faithful, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him.

This incident indicates the superiority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They completely submitted to the teachings of Islam. They not only fulfilled the obligatory duties and avoided all sins but completely fulfilled all acts which were recommended to them to the highest possible degree. Their submission caused them to put aside their own desires and only act to please Allah, the Exalted. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily ignored the Bedouin as none of the actions he done were obligatory yet, unlike many Muslims who would use this excuse, he completely submitted to the teachings of Islam and acted the way he did.

It is the lack of submission to the teachings of Islam which has weakened the faith of Muslims. Some only fulfil the obligatory duties and turn away from other righteous deeds, such as voluntary charity, which contradict their desires by claiming the actions are not obligatory. All Muslims desire to end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. But how is this possible if they do not follow their path or way? If a Muslim follows a path other than theirs then how can they end up with them? To end up with them one must follow their path. But this is only possible if one completely submits to the teachings of Islam like they did instead of cherry picking the deeds which suit their desires.

Harming the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. A Companion, Amr Bin Shas Al Aslami, may Allah be pleased with him, who was part of this expedition felt that Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, had treated him harshly. When Amr returned to Medina he criticized Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, in various meetings and to different people he spoke with. One day, he entered the Mosque and found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who stared at him until he sat down next to him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then told Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, that he had harmed him. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, expressed his remorse at harming him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, finally commented that whoever harmed Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, harmed him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 143.

First of all it is important for Muslims to overlook the insignificant negative behaviour of others. All Muslims hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on

reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

In addition, this incident highlights a sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

namely, to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

Being True

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. During this expedition Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, selected some camels as charitable donations for the needy. Some of his men asked if they could ride these camels thereby giving rest to their own camels. But he refused by stating that as they were selected for charitable donations only those entitled could make use of them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 144.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”

Showing Trust

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, sent back a chunk of gold to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he divided amongst four people. Someone commented that they had more right to the gold than those men. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he questioned whether the people trusted him and added that he was trusted by the One who sends down to him news from Heaven, morning and evening. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 146.

A Muslim must show their trust in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by sincerely following and obeying him, even if the wisdoms behind his traditions are not apparent to them. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy 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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

Judging Actions Positively

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition to Yemen led by Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, sent back a chunk of gold to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he divided amongst four people. Someone commented that they had more right to the gold than those men. When this reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he questioned whether the people trusted him and added that he was trusted by the One who sends down to him news from Heaven, morning and evening. After this a man rudely told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fear Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rebuked him reminding him and others that he feared Allah, the Exalted, the most. The man then walked away. Khalid Bin Walid, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission to execute the man for his blasphemy but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him commenting that the man might be someone who offers the obligatory prayers. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that they were plenty of people who prayed yet were hypocrites as they declared things verbally which contradicted what was in their hearts. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then responded that he was not commanded to search the hearts of people nor to cut open their stomachs searching for their intention. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 146.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins such as backbiting and slander. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice and it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits such as bitterness.

It is important for Muslims to understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”

The Farewell Holy Pilgrimage

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 152.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according

to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

Sincerity in Actions

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Medina he was riding on a tattered saddle beneath which was an inexpensive piece of cloth. His entire baggage was mounted with him. He then commented that the Holy Pilgrimage is to be devoid of showing off and reputation-seeking. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 155.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward as this Muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it

through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a Muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is when one publically recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publically can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a Muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech.

What is Sacred

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When he reached a valley called Wadi Al Aqiq the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he received a visitation from a spirit from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, an Angel, who told him to pray in this sacred valley. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 162.

Most Muslims show great respect to sacred places and Islamic artefacts but often neglect the other things Allah, the Exalted, has made sacred.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a Muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches Muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough.

A true believer and Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A Muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner.

The honor of a Muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A Muslim should instead defend the honor of others whether in their presence or absence as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Sermon at Arafat

Religion Over Culture

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he had destroyed everything relating to the ignorant practices which were common prior to Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 210-211.

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.

The Law Applies to All

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he had abolished the usury charges people agreed to prior to Islam as it was unlawful. The first usury charge he declared abolished was that of his own uncle, Abbas Bin Abdul Muttalib, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 210-211.

One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a Muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.

In addition, financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing

good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their 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 lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society,

instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Harmony in Marriage

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that Muslims should fear Allah, the Exalted, in respect to their wives by treating them kindly at all times. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 210-211.

If both women and men desire to experience a successful marriage they must find a spouse based on the teachings of Islam. Failing to follow this important advice is one of the main reasons why domestic violence and divorces amongst Muslims has increased over time. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish

as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst Muslims in recent years.

Finally, if a Muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Islam Honors Women

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that Muslims should fear Allah, the Exalted, in respect to their wives by treating them kindly at all times. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 210-211.

On a general note, before Islam, in the age of ignorance, it was common practice for women to be equated with articles of home use. They would be bought and sold like cattle. A woman had no rights in respect to marriage. Far from being entitled to some share in the inheritance from her relatives, she herself was treated as a piece of the inheritance like other household items. She was considered as something owned by men while she was allowed to own nothing. And she could only spend according to the wishes of a man. Whereas, the man could spend any wealth which should belong to her, like wages, according to his desires. She did not even have the right to question this method. Some groups from Europe even considered women not to be a human and equated her with an animal. Women had no place in religion. They were considered unfit for worship. Some even declared women to possess no souls. It was considered completely normal for a father to kill his newborn or young daughter as they were seen as a shame on the family. Some even believed that no act of justice would be taken against the one who killed a woman. Some customs even killed the wife of a dead husband as she was not seen fit enough to live without him. Some even declared that the purpose of women was only to serve men.

But Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught man to respect all people, made justice and equity the law and men were made responsible for fulfilling the rights of women parallel to their own rights on them. Women were made free and independent. She became the owner of her own life and property, just like men. No man can force a woman to marry someone. If she is forced to without her consent then it becomes her choice to continue the marriage or annul it. No man has a right to spend anything from what belongs to her without her consent and approval. After the death of her husband or after divorce she becomes independent and she cannot be compelled by anyone to do anything. She gets a share in the inheritance like men according to the responsibilities given to her by Allah, the Exalted. To spend on women and treat them well has been declared an act of worship by Allah, the Exalted. All these rights and more have been given to women by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is strange how those who stand up for women's rights today criticize Islam even though it gave women rights centuries earlier.

Superiority in Islam

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that no Arab was superior to a foreigner, nor a foreigner to an Arab. The only quality that makes any person superior to others is piety. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1958.

In a Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many Muslims have erected these barriers such as social castes and sects thereby believing some are better than others Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that in this respect all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one Muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

A Muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the Muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Hold Onto Success

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the land of Arafat he gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he was leaving behind for them the Holy Quran and his traditions, which will keep them rightly guided as long as they held onto them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 210-211 and in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Page 464.

Holding onto them involves sincerely obeying and following them at all times.

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “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.

Do No Harm

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). An aspect of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) is to touch and kiss the Black Stone which is attached to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once told Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that even though he was a strong man he should not jostle in order to reach the Black Stone as this may cause harm to others. If he could not find a way to the Black Stone because of a rush of people he should salute it from a distance. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 228.

Even though reaching the Black Stone is an act of worship yet a Muslim is not allowed to harm others in the process. This indicates the importance of refraining from harming others. In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

A Sublime Revelation

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). On the Day of Arafat, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, the following divine revelation was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him: chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 3:

“...This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion...”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 254.

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, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

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.

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, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "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.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all

times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins

veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”

Hold Onto Faith

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). On the Day of Arafat, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, the following divine revelation was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him: chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 3:

"...This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion..."

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 309.

After hearing this, Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, wept. When he was questioned about his reaction he replied that after perfection there can only be decline.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the Muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to

compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many Muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

What is Piety

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, set off from Arafat the people hurried after him. He then ordered someone to declare to the people that piety is not measured by speed. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 257.

Piety cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall

into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

The Correct Way

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When he reached Wadi Muhassir he threw pebbles at the Jamarat and ordered the people to do the same. He then advised them that they should adopt their rites from him as they may not see him after that year. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 264.

Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, specifically mentioned the rites of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) yet his words indirectly mean that a Muslim must follow his traditions in all aspects of their life. This has been made crystal clear by the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”

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.

Controlling Temptations

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached the station of sacrificing animals in Mina, he had his young cousin Fadl Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, mounted behind him on his camel. A young woman approached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked him a question. While answering her question, he physically turned his cousin's head away from the young woman so that he could not see her. When he was questioned about this he replied that he saw a young man and woman in close proximity to one another and he could not trust the Devil with them meaning, negatively influencing them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 265.

Muslims should take precautions in order to avoid being tempted into illegal relationships. Firstly, they should learn to lower their gaze. This does not mean one should always stare at their shoes but it means they should avoid looking around unnecessary especially in public places. They should avoid staring at others and maintain respect for the opposite gender. Just like a Muslim would not like someone staring at their sister or daughter they should not stare at other people's sisters and daughters. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 30:

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision¹ and guard their private parts. That is purer for them...”

Whenever possible a Muslim should avoid spending time alone with the opposite gender unless they are related in a way which prohibits marriage. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1862.

Muslims should dress and behave with modesty. Dressing modestly avoids attracting the glances of strangers and behaving modestly prevents one from taking the initial steps which could lead to an illegal relationship such as talking unnecessarily to the opposite gender.

Understanding the blessings of avoiding illegal relationships is another way to protect oneself from them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed Paradise to the one who safeguards their tongue and chastity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2408.

Fearing the punishment of being involved in illegal relationships will also aid a Muslim to avoid them. For example, faith will depart from the person who is committing fornication. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4690.

In reality, a Muslim does not need illegal relationships as Islam prescribes marriage. Those who cannot afford to marry should fast often as this also helps to control one's desires and actions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3398.

Religion of Ease

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). On the morning of the day of sacrifice, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked his cousin, Fadl Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, to gather some pebbles for him which are used to stone the Jamarat at Mina. Fadl, may Allah be pleased with him, chose small pebbles which could be used in a sling shot and gave them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was pleased with his selection. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then advised that one should beware of excess, as it was excess in religion which destroyed the former nations. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 267.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 39, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that religion is simple and straight forward. And a Muslim should not over burden themselves as they will not be able to keep up with it.

This means that a Muslim should always lead a simple religious and worldly life. Islam does not demand Muslims to overburden themselves in performing righteous deeds. But it in fact teaches simplicity which is the most beloved religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. A Muslim should firstly strive to fulfil their obligatory duties which are undoubtedly within their strength to fulfil as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a Muslim with more

than they can bear. This is confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286 of the Holy Quran:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

Next, they should take some time out of their day to study Islamic teachings so that they can act on the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to their strength. This attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted, which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

If a Muslim persists on this behaviour they will be provided with such mercy that they will fulfil all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and find time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excess, waste or extravagance.

This is how a Muslim makes things easier for themselves. And if they possess dependents, such as children, they should teach them the same thereby, making things easier for them also. Overburdening oneself makes things hard and can push one to completely quit. And relaxing too much will make things hard as one will lose out on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds through laziness.

True Sacrifice

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sacrificed a total of 100 camels for his Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 209.

The sacrifice is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, which Muslims imitate during the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) season. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was commanded to sacrifice his son the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him. Chapter 37 As Saffat, verse 102:

"And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.""

The first lesson to understand is the importance of patience when facing tests and trials. A Muslim should always remember that those more beloved than them to Allah, the Exalted, namely, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were put through much more severe tests than them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, that no one has been tested more for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, than him.

Muslims should also bear in mind that no matter what situation they find themselves in it is beneficial for them. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, that if a Muslim faces a difficulty and shows patience they will be rewarded for it. And if they face times of ease and show gratitude they will be rewarded for it. So according to this Hadith every situation a Muslim encounters is beneficial, even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Muslims should also understand that they will encounter a situation which has been decreed for them by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how they react to it. If they face it with patience they will find an uncountable reward in this world and in the next. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit].”

But if they face it with impatience then they will face more difficulties. So either way they have to face the difficulty so they might as well gain benefit from it.

In addition, a Muslim should not be naïve and realize that this world is not Paradise. It is a world created in order to test mankind so it therefore can never be free of tests and trials. When a Muslim recognizes its innate nature facing difficulties and tests does not surprise them as they expect this from the world. The same way a person expects to get attacked if they find themselves with a wild animal they should expect tests and trials in this world. Mentally preparing in this way will prevent a Muslim being caught off guard which is a cause of impatience.

Another lesson to learn from this great event is that the same way a person cannot gain things in this material world, such as wealth without sacrifice neither can a Muslim obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without sacrifice. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 2:

“Do the people think that they will be left to say, “We believe” and they will not be tried?”

Muslims should be grateful that Allah, the Exalted, does not require them to make big sacrifices like the ones made by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, and the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Nor is Allah, the Exalted, demanding Muslims to sacrifice in the way the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. They sacrificed their wealth, homes, families and lives. Instead, Allah, the

Exalted, has entrusted Muslims with a few obligatory duties which require little sacrifice of their time, energy and wealth. If one ponders over the greatness of Paradise they will realise the sacrifices they have been encouraged to make are very small compared to the promised reward. Therefore, Muslims should show gratitude for this by submitting obediently to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

The sacrifice of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, is an indication that a Muslim should always be ready to sacrifice their desires, love and wishes for the command of Allah, the Exalted. The ritual of sacrificing animals for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, Muslims perform annually stands for this. It is not simply a sacrifice of an animal but much more. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 37:

“Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you;...”

Muslims should adopt the piety mentioned in this verse all year round by placing the commands of Allah, the Exalted, before their desires. Only then will they be able to truly follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, correctly.

Another important lesson to learn from this great event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah,

the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one's control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Love is in Actions

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). After performing the sacrifice, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded a barber to shave his head, starting with the right side. He then commanded the shaved hair to be distributed to the people. His Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, encircled him while his head was being shaved so that none of his hair would fall onto the floor. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 272.

It is obvious that they behaved in this manner out of love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Prioritising Correctly

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stopped at the well of Zamzam near the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. He observed the tribe of Abdul Muttalib serving water to the pilgrims from the well which they had done for many years. He advised them to continue in this manner as they were doing proper work. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 277-278.

Islam does not teach mankind to abandon the material world as it is a source of resources which need to be utilized in the correct way in order to reach the hereafter safely. Islam teaches Muslims to prioritize their activities in the correct way so that they achieve true peace 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.

Use Your Energy

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stopped at the well of Zamzam near the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. He observed the tribe of Abdul Muttalib serving water to the pilgrims from the well which they had done for many years. He advised them to continue in this manner as they were doing proper work. He commented that if it were not for people who would prevent the tribe from drawing water from the well by doing it themselves in emulation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he would have drawn water from the well himself. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 277-278.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who is independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

Sermon at Mina

Passing on Correct Knowledge

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he said was that those present and listening should inform those who are absent. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 280.

When spreading the awareness of Islam within society it is vital one ensures that the correct knowledge is passed on. Otherwise, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 206, a person may not only get punished for passing on incorrect knowledge but that punishment will increase depending on how many people act on it. Unfortunately, this Hadith is very commonly overlooked resulting in the spread of unreliable and incorrect knowledge. The lack of correct knowledge can open the door to unbelief. For example, some people label everything they do not understand as innovation or polytheism. They even happily label Muslims as apostates without realizing a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 216. It clearly warns that if one falsely accuses a Muslim of disbelief the accuser loses their faith. Ignorance is one of the weapons of the Devil and one can only avoid this trap by gaining correct knowledge from a reliable scholar before spreading it. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 9:

“...Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" ...”

Refrain from Harm

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he said was that the blood and possessions of a Muslim are sacred. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 280.

A Muslim can fulfill this command by treating others how they themselves wish to be treated by people. This is in fact the sign of a true believer according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

This does not mean a Muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a Muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a Muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the Muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A Muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify

their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for Muslims to understand that desiring good for others will cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a Muslim forbids evil and offers advice which contradicts the desire of others they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing the blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

“...So for this let the competitors compete.”

This encouragement will also inspire a Muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

Hear and Obey

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he urged the Muslims to do was to listen and obey their commander who guided them with the Holy Quran irrespective of their social status, such as being a slave. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 282-283.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you..."

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders

should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Family Ties

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he urged Muslims to do was to fulfil the rights their relatives have over them by specifically listing one's mother, father, sister, brother and then the next closest relative. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 284.

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a Muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches Muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a Muslim should command their relatives to do

good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them.
Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for

decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a Muslim to cut off ties from another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

A Branch of Hypocrisy

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he said was that Allah, the Exalted, may overlook the mistakes of people except for the one who borrows wealth from a Muslim with the intention not to repay the loan. This person has a huge problem and is ruined. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 284.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that breaking promises is an aspect of hypocrisy.

The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. All other promises made with people must also be kept unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed?

Trusting in Allah (SWT)

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during the days at Mina. One of the things he said was that there is no disease for which Allah, the Exalted, did not provide a cure for, except for senility meaning, old age. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 284.

This incident indicates a branch of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, namely, using the lawful means Allah, the Exalted, has created in the correct way. The other branch is firmly believing that the outcome of a situation, which Allah, the Exalted, has chosen, is best for all involved, even if one fails to observe the wisdoms behind the choice.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah,

the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

“...And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him...”

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam they are undoubtedly obeying Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to himself is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

Fighting Each Other

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he said was that Muslims should not revert to disbelief after him by striking the necks of each other. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *the Life of the Prophet*, Volume 4, Page 284.

A Hadith found in *Sahih Muslim*, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been

warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a

person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning

and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Protecting Children

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he said was that a Muslim should not harm their child. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 284-285.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds Muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their

children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a Muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

Step Back and Assess

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he said was that the Devil had despaired as he would no longer be worshipped in Arabia however Muslims will obey him in some actions which seem insignificant to them yet these actions will please the Devil. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 284-285.

This incident is connected to chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 38:

"...And Satan had made pleasing to them their deeds and averted them from the path..."

As mentioned in this verse the Devil fools people into committing sins and making wrong decisions by beautifying the incorrect choice for them. This occurs in situations when a person must make a choice between two or more options. It also occurs when the choice is between the lawful and unlawful and even between two lawful options. If the Devil cannot guide someone to a sin then he attempts to guide them to the inferior option, even if it is lawful, hoping it will lead to some sort of a sin, such as a person complaining about life and destiny. The Devil beautifies a choice by causing one to focus on its apparent benefit to such a degree that they

lose focus on the bigger picture and the consequences of the choice. An adult then behaves like a child who makes choices without reflecting over the consequences of their actions. This is one of the main reasons why people commit sins. In reality, if one truly reflected on the punishment of sins they would never commit them.

Something which helps in situations like this is to mentally take a step back and assess the options by comparing their long-term benefits and harms. Only when the lawful benefits of something outweighs the harm should a person proceed. The other thing which helps is to deeply reflect on the consequences of the potential options. Some choices might be lawful but if one goes ahead with them it may make their life difficult in the long run. For example, sometimes people rush into marriage with someone they apparently love. They base their decision solely on their feelings instead of reflecting on other more important aspects, for example, if their potential future spouse will make a good life partner or a good parent and if they will help them in their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Many marriages have ended in divorce because the couple did not reflect on the long term implications of a potential marriage. Many people often claim their spouse was very different before they got married but in most cases they have not changed at all. The truth is that before marriage they did not spend so much time with them so they did not observe certain characteristics which became obvious after marriage.

Some often rush into action and later have regrets as their choice caused them more trouble and in many cases the issue was not a big deal in the first place. This type of action can only be avoided when one reflects on the situation and observes the bigger picture meaning, the wider and long-term implications and consequences of taking a step forward.

One should not only assess if something is lawful or unlawful before making a decision. Even though, this is the most important thing to consider yet, it is not the only thing. As many lawful incorrect choices, which are beautified by the Devil, can lead to trouble further on in life.

To sum up, before making any choice a person must take a step back and reflect deeply over its lawfulness and its potential long-term benefits and harms under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever acts like this will rarely make a wrong choice they later regret.

Do Not Wrong

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he advised is that a Muslim should do no wrong and they therefore will not be wronged. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 284-285.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true

guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A Muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

One Body

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he said was that the Devil had despaired as he would no longer be worshipped in Arabia however he would still continue to sow discord amongst Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 290.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the Muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a Muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others thereby failing their duty in supporting others according to their means. A Muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends to beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

Even though a Muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

Repay Trusts

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a sermon during these days. One of the things he said is that Muslims should fulfill their trusts. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 291-292.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they gain further blessings as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims.

Sermon at Ghadir Khumm

Two Treasures of Islam

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). On the way back to Medina after completing it, he gave a sermon at Ghadir Khumm. He urged the Muslims to adhere to the two treasures he was leaving behind namely, the Holy Quran and his family, may Allah be pleased with them. He concluded that these two would not separate from one another until they reach him at his celestial pool on the Day of Judgement. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 301.

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 30, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the Holy Quran will intercede on Judgment Day. Those who follow it during their lives on Earth will be led to Paradise on Judgment Day. But those who neglect it during their lives on Earth will find that it pushes them into Hell on Judgment Day.

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

In addition, this incident indicates the high status of the Holy Prophet's family, may Allah be pleased with them.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love

Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

Safeguarding Speech

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). After returning to Medina, he mounted the pulpit and gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that one should not harm Muslims through their speech and if a Muslim should die, others should only speak good about them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 308-309.

It is vital for Muslims to be constantly aware of what they say as it only takes a single word to cause them to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970. It is important that a person thinks before speaking and only proceeds when the words will not be sinful or vain. This is the sign of an intelligent person. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, a way for a Muslim to escape all the dangers of the tongue namely, to either speak good or remain silent. Gaining knowledge on the dangers of the tongue will enforce this teaching. But if a Muslim remains ignorant they will commit many sins through their words without even realising it. This is why gaining knowledge has been made a duty on all Muslims which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

The 11th Year After Migration

The Final Illness of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Remembering Others

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When this occurred he went out to a cemetery, the Baqi Al Gharqad, in the middle of the night and prayed for the forgiveness for those buried there. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 321.

Remembering others in this way is an aspect of being sincere to them. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts oneself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can

still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”

Cling to Faith

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When this occurred he went out to a cemetery, the Baqi Al Gharqad, in the middle of the night and prayed for the forgiveness for those buried there. He then commented that the people buried there should be content that they will not experience the things the living will face namely, troubles which are like dark portions of the night which will follow one another in succession, the last of them being worse than the first. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 321.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His

prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the Muslim nation. Therefore, Muslims should not get distracted by them and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Preferring the Eternal

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When this occurred he went out to a cemetery, the Baqi Al Gharqad, in the middle of the night and prayed for the forgiveness for those buried there. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then told the Companion, Abu Muwwaihibah, may Allah be pleased with him, who was with him, that he had been given a choice between having the keys of the treasures of this world and deathlessness in it (until Judgement Day) after which he would enter Paradise or meeting his Lord and then entering Paradise. Abu Muwwaihibah, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him to take the former option but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he preferred the latter option. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 321 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1975-1976.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, preferred the hereafter because he clearly understood the difference between this world and the next.

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.

Visiting Uhud & Giving A Sermon

A Prophetic Witness

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. He then went out to Uhud and observed a farewell prayer for the martyrs buried there. It was though he was saying goodbye to both the dead and the living. He then ascended his pulpit and gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he would be preceding them and he was a witness over them. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 471-472.

It is important to note that a witness can testify in someone's favor or against them. In order for one to receive a favorable testimony they must sincerely obey and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he is the first person to intercede and the first person whose intercession will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

A Muslim should therefore strive to make themselves worthy of the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by performing the actions which result in this such as supplicating for it after hearing the call to prayer. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 679. But this would require one to regularly attend the obligatory prayers at a Mosque instead of offering them at home. The greatest action which will result in the intercession is learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Muslim should not live in heedlessness by rejecting this duty and then expect intercession on Judgment Day as this is closer to wishful thinking which is blame worthy and of no real value compared to true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some Muslims who have adopted this wishful thinking expect to obtain Paradise through this intercession even though they do not 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. These Muslims must realise that even though the intercession is a fact some Muslims who will have their punishment reduced through intercession 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.

Meeting the Prophet (PBUH)

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. He then went out to Uhud and observed a farewell prayer for the martyrs buried there. It was though he was saying goodbye to both the dead and the living. He then ascended his pulpit and gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he would be preceding them and he was a witness over them and that they would be meeting him very soon at his celestial pool. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 471-472.

There are many Hadiths which discuss the celestial pool such as the one found in *Sahih Bukhari*, number 6579. It advises that it takes a month to cross its entire length, its smell is nicer than perfume, its water is whiter than milk and the one who drinks from it once will never feel thirsty again. The last point is extremely important as on Judgment Day people will experience an extreme and unimaginable thirst. For example, the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation which will cause people to sweat excessively. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, number 2421.

There is no doubt that every Muslim desires to drink from this pool irrespective of the strength of their faith. But it is important to note, that a Muslim should strive to make themselves worthy of drinking from it instead of simply hoping to achieve this. This is achieved by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, Muslims must avoid disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, especially those things which prevent one from reaching the celestial pool. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 5996, warns that some Muslims who innovated evil things in Islam will be detained and prevented from reaching the celestial pool. Another Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4212, warns that those who support and believe the lies and wrong actions of the unjust rulers will not reach the celestial pool. So it is important for Muslims who desire to reach and drink from the celestial pool to avoid disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, and strive in His sincere obedience.

Fearing for the People

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. He then went out to Uhud and observed a farewell prayer for the martyrs buried there. It was though he was saying goodbye to both the dead and the living. He then ascended his pulpit and gave a sermon. One of the things he said was that he did not fear the people becoming polytheists after him but instead feared that the acquisition of worldly riches will entice them to fight each other. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 471-472.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the Muslim nation. Instead he feared that the world would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it which would lead to their destruction as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires

have taken control over many Muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

Fulfil Rights in Ease and Hardship

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. He would always give equal time and attention to each of his wives but when he was overcome with pain he summoned his wives and sought permission from them for him to stay and be nursed in the home of his wife Aisha Bint Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 323.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A Muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The second is to fulfill the rights of people which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A Muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them

in bad things simply because they are their relatives neither should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

The best way to guide others is through a practical example as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

Nobility is in Obedience

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, his daughter, Fatima, may Allah be pleased with her, visited him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told her that his death was approaching and that she should fear Allah, the Exalted, be patient and follow his traditions as he was a worthy predecessor to her. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 325.

Even though Fatima, may Allah be pleased with her, is from the most noble family yet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned her to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and follow his traditions at all times.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made of dust. Therefore, people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant Muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects

thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people such as one’s race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a Muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard

or wearing a scarf yet, fail to adopt his inner character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these Muslims.

Avoid the Desire to Lead

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was indirectly advised to ask the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who would lead the Muslims after him. He replied that he would not ask him about this nor would he ask to be appointed as the leader. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 326.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and social status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it they

will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

The Final Sermon

Concealing Faults

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon in which he praised the Companions especially, the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. He encouraged the Companions from Mecca, the Migrants, may Allah be pleased with them, to always honor the Companions of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and overlook their faults. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 328-329.

Perhaps the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged the Migrants from Mecca to treat well the Helpers of Medina, may Allah be pleased with them all, in this way, as the leadership after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, went to the Migrants from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them.

In addition, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the

faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known to others it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.

A Fine Choice

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon in which he declared that a servant of Allah, the Exalted, was given a choice between what is on Earth and what is with Allah, the Exalted, and the servant had chosen what is with Allah, the Exalted. Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, then wept as he knew the servant the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was referring to was himself. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 328-329.

It is important for Muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of Muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These Muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

These Muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a Muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

Joining the Righteous

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon in which he praised Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. He declared that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the most faithful to him in his friendship and his wealth. And if he were to take an intimate friend after Allah, the Exalted, it would be Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. Then he commanded that no gate shall be kept open in the Mosque except that of Abu Bakr's, may Allah be pleased with him (the gate the leader of the congregational prayer would use). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 329-330 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3654.

This incident makes it clear that Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, proved his love and sincerity to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through actions.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All Muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly

warns that a Muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient Muslims. How can a disobedient Muslim be counted as an obedient Muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 20:

“Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success].”

A Clean Heart

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon. One of the things he said was that his absence (death) was near at hand. And if there was anyone he had unjustly physically harmed then they could take retaliation from him. And if there was anyone whose wealth he took without returning it then they should step forward for compensation. And if there was anyone whose honor he violated then they should take retaliation against his honor. He added that none of them should fear that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would hold rancor in his heart against anyone who steps forward for retaliation as this is not in his nature or character. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 331-332.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others as this causes ill feelings towards them in people's hearts.

It is often observed that families especially, from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one the biggest complaints family members, such as parents often have. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another they will get affected by it even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly none the less it still affects their hearts. If

one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson for example, if a mother desires to teach one of her children not to behave as their sibling did they then should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, Muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publically. Otherwise, they may well find as time passes their family becomes separated and emotionally distant from one another.

The Bankrupt

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon. One of the things he said was that his absence (death) was near at hand. And if there was anyone he had unjustly physically harmed then they could take retaliation from him. And if there was anyone whose wealth he took without returning it then they should step forward for compensation. And if there was anyone whose honor he violated then they should take retaliation against his honor. He added that none of them should fear that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would hold rancor in his heart against anyone who steps forward for retaliation as this is not in his nature or character. He concluded that the best people in his sight were those who either took their retaliation from him or they forgive it, as he desired to meet Allah, the Exalted, free of any injustices against the creation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 331-332.

Even though it is clearly evident that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never wronged anyone else yet he gave this sermon out of humility and to warn Muslims of avoiding harming others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt Muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be

given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a Muslim must fulfil two aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is in respect to people which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving a Muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a Muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others. It is therefore important for Muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

Types of Regrets

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this period, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a public sermon. One of the things he said was that a scandal on Earth is easier to bear than a scandal in the hereafter. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 332.

A scandal can be referring to any type of regret or failure. Muslims should understand that regrets can be classified into two categories. The first are the regrets over worldly things such as not getting married or having children. The second category are the regrets one will have in their grave and on Judgment Day, such as not making better use of their time in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The worldly regrets, irrespective of what they are, will never be permanent as they will either end when one fulfils their desire, changes their mind or dies. They are temporary in nature as the maximum time one can have this type of regret is until their death. And they are not so significant as these regrets may lead to sadness but not severe punishment or torment. In addition, these regrets will end if a person reaches Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the regrets of the hereafter are long lasting as the time in the grave and on Judgment Day will be much longer than one's life on this Earth. They will not end until one enters Paradise which may not happen or it may occur after an extremely long time as a single day in the hereafter is equivalent to a thousand years on Earth. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 47:

“...And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.”

Finally, these regrets are very significant as they may well lead to a severe punishment and torment in the hereafter.

Therefore, a Muslim should ponder over this and be kind to themselves by striving to remove the potential regrets they will have in the grave and on Judgment Day before they try to remove the regrets of this world. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””

Moulding Life

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. On a particular night when his illness grew intense, he asked those around him if the people had prayed but they replied that they were waiting for him to lead the congregational prayer. He asked them to pour some water into a basin. He then washed himself and attempted to get up in order to lead the congregational prayer but due to his illness he fainted. When he regained consciousness the first thing he asked was whether the people had prayed or not. But his family, may Allah be pleased with them, replied that the people were still waiting for him to lead the congregational prayer. He once again washed himself and attempted to get up in order to lead the congregational prayer but due to his illness he again fainted. After this occurred again he gave the order for Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the congregational prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 334-335.

The thing to note is that even during this extreme difficulty the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was completely concerned with offering the obligatory prayer.

Muslims often question how they can mould their life to fit their faith instead of moulding their faith in order to fit their worldly life. One of the ways of achieving this is by always performing the obligatory prayers as soon as they occur for women and to offer the obligatory prayers at the Mosques for men.

As establishing the prayers is the main pillar of Islam, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, when one performs it as described it forces them to arrange their worldly activities so that they fit around their obligatory prayers. Whereas, when one either offers their obligatory prayers late or at home instead of the Mosque it becomes easy to fit the obligatory prayers around one's worldly time table which in turn causes them to mould their faith around their worldly life. The correct attitude will also prevent one from indulging in unnecessary and vain activities, such as visiting the shopping centres unnecessarily, as these often prevent a Muslim from offering their obligatory prayers on time or at the Mosque. Avoiding these unnecessary things and activities allows one to mould their life around their religion.

In addition, as offering the obligatory prayers on time is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 611, a Muslim should adhere to this habit and not postpone offering their obligatory prayers without an extremely good reason which only occurs very rarely. If one desires to mould their life around their faith then they must fulfil their obligatory prayers on time as soon as they happen for women and men should fulfil them at the Mosque with congregation. This will ensure they prioritise preparing for the hereafter without becoming distracted by the excess of this material world.

A Practical Role Model

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When his illness grew intense he ordered a Companion, Abdullah Bin Zam'a, to tell Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with them, to lead the congregational prayer. When Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, entered the Mosque who could not find Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, and as he did not desire for the prayer to be delayed he told Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the prayer instead. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, began the prayer, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, overheard his voice and declared that Allah, the Exalted, and the Muslims refuse anyone except Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, then arrived and prayed with the people. Later on, Umar would criticize Abdullah Bin Zam'a, may Allah be pleased with them, as he believed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to lead the prayer otherwise he would never have done so. Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, would apologize but added that as Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was absent from the Mosque at that time, he believed that no one was more worthy of leading the prayer after Abu Bakr than Umar, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 332-333.

On another occasion, while Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was leading the prayer, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, entered upon the congregation. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, began to withdraw from leading the prayer but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to stay where he was and instead sat next to him on his left side. Therefore, the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, while the latter led the rest of the people in prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Pages 476-477.

First of all these events, like many others, clearly indicates that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the desired choice of being the first Caliph of Islam. In addition, the first incident played out in such a way that it even indicated that the second Caliph of Islam should be Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him.

The important thing to note is that these pious souls were chosen for leadership as they possessed the qualities of a good leader. The greatest of which is leading by example. This quality all Muslims should strive to adopt as every Muslim is a representative of Islam for other Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the early days of Islam to attend a gathering of Islamic knowledge one had to journey for days but now countless lectures can be found online. Yet, ignorance of the correct path has only increased since the passing of the righteous predecessors. This is because some have acquired knowledge by memorizing verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but have not used them to purify their character. Meaning, they did not act on their knowledge. Those who act like this will lose the power to affect the hearts of others through their advice. Some lecturers are like news bulletins that only provide information without stimulating others to act thereby failing in their duty to guide others through their God given knowledge. Non-Muslims are mainly accepting Islam through their own research of Islam

instead of observing a practical example of a successful Muslim. One who desires to spread Islam must make it their priority to purify their character through knowledge. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

When one acts in this way then a little correct knowledge will have a massive impact on themselves and others. Whereas, those who reject this correct attitude may possess more knowledge but it will have no positive effect on anybody. This type of person has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

All Pains

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When his illness grew intense, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and touched him in a comforting gesture. He felt and commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was suffering from a very high fever. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that his fever was twice the limit other people face. Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he should be rewarded twice for it to which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed. Then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that every single Muslim who suffers from illness shall have their sins cast away from them just like a tree drops its leaves. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 340.

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a Muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a Muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after.

This is not true patience instead it is only acceptance which occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A Muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A Muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Thinking Well of Allah (SWT)

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During this time, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that at the time of death one should only think positively about Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 341.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop

healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

Living Simply

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. In his final night, his home possessed no oil to light a lantern and as a result his wife, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, had to borrow some oil from their neighbour. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even mortgaged, as a security, his armor to a Jewish man for some barely, as his family had no food to eat. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, *The Sealed Nectar*, Page 477.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Beautification

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During his last moments the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was wearing a simple and coarse Yemeni wrap and upper garment. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 345.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a Muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, such as their dependents.

Divine Love

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. During the last stages the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and asked him to grant permission to the Angel of Death who was waiting outside. He commented that the Angel of Death had never sought permission to enter into someone's home before that nor will he after that. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, granted him permission. The Angel of Death commented that Allah, the Exalted, had commanded him to obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Angel of Death then offered a choice to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to either allow him to take his soul or if he commanded he would leave him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, looked over to the Angel Jibrael, peace be upon him, who commented that Allah, the Exalted, was longing to meet him. Then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told the Angel of Death to proceed and take his soul. This has been discussed in Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 394-395.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, obtained the love of Allah, the Exalted, because of his sincere obedience to Him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A Muslim should focus on their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a Muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a Muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they become famous they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

Final Words - 1

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. Some of the final words spoken by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were on the importance of treating those under one's authority, such as one's servants, well. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2698.

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true Muslim and a true believer. A true Muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of verbal and physical sins which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others as this contradicts sincerity towards others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A Muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

Physical harm includes causing problems for other people's livelihood, committing fraud, conning others and physical abuse. All of these characteristics contradict Islamic teachings and must be avoided.

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

To conclude a Muslim must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions as they are the physical proof of one's belief which will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. In addition, a Muslim should fulfill the characteristics of true belief in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. An excellent way of achieving this in respect to people is to simply treat others how they wish to be treated by people, which is with respect and peace.

Final Words - 2

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. Some of the final words spoken by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were on the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2698.

Out of all the things he could have advised on he chose to mention the obligatory prayers. This alone should make one understand the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the prayer is the thing which separates disbelief from belief. Muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they believe in Him and call upon Him. But as most of them have failed to establish their obligatory prayers they have been cut off from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that establishing the obligatory prayers is the first barrier which protects them from misguidance. One only needs to reflect on the people they know who became misguided and in most cases the first step of their misguidance was failing to establish the obligatory prayers meaning, fulfilling them according to their etiquettes and conditions. When this barrier was destroyed then misguidance and committing major sins became easy. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

Therefore, Muslims should act on the final words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by correctly establishing their obligatory prayers and encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. It is best to encourage them before it becomes obligatory on them so that they become used to it by the time they reach this age. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495.

Muslims should not make up lame excuses when failing this duty as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden someone with a duty they cannot fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”

Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Devotion to Allah (SWT)

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. Before his illness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that no Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, would be taken by death until he saw his resting place in Paradise and had been asked to make a choice between life and death. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4428, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the poison he was given at Khaybar years earlier was causing him pain and felt he would die from it. This indicates that Allah, the Exalted, granted him the honor of martyrdom. During his final moments, he raised his sight to the sky and declared to the Highest Companion meaning, to Allah, the Exalted. He was 63 years old when he passed away. He was transferred to an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 343.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

It is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was transported by Allah, the Exalted, from this transient abode away into eternal ease in an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“...it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

And chapter 93 Ad Duhaa, verses 4-5:

“And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied.”

That was after he had completed his mission that Allah, the Exalted, entrusted him with. He had given advice to his nation and had directed them to the very best in both worlds. He had warned them and restrained them from what would have harmed them here on Earth and in the Hereafter. Peace and blessings be upon him, the final Messenger of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

A Positive Attitude

The day the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died all things became dark. Despite this momentous loss, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised Muslims that were afflicted with a calamity, to remember the calamity of losing him as that was the greatest calamity of this world. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH)*, Volume 1, Page 1985.

It is important for Muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse. If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a Muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds Muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

To conclude, a Muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

Speech of Abu Bakr (RA) After the Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Remaining Obedient

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. Due to their intense sadness each person reacted differently to the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, initially refused to believe it and claimed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had gone to visit Allah, the Exalted, and would return, just like the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had an appointment with Allah, the Exalted, and as a result left his people for forty days.

When Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, arrived he addressed the people in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He recited chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 144:

“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your

heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all..."

And then said the following: "Allah, the Exalted, gave life to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and kept him alive until he had established the religion of Allah, the Exalted, made the orders of Allah, the Exalted, plain, delivered His message and fought in His cause. Thereafter Allah, the Exalted, took him to Himself and left you upon the path. And none shall perish except after clear signs and pain. Those whose Lord is Allah, the Exalted, should know that Allah, the Exalted, is alive and will never die. And those who worshipped the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should know that he has died. Fear Allah, the Exalted, people! Hold fast to your religion and put your trust in your Lord. The religion of Allah, the Exalted, is established. The word of Allah, the Exalted, is complete. Allah, the Exalted, will help those who support Him and who revere His religion. The Book of Allah, the Exalted, is amongst us. It is both the light and the cure. By it, Allah, the Exalted, guided the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In it states what Allah, the Exalted, considers lawful and what is unlawful. We will not care who out of the creation descends upon us (to attack us). We will fight vigorously against those who oppose us just as we fought alongside the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 348-349.

After Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, addressed the people, they all accepted the truth. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, felt dizzy and fell to the ground and finally accepted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had in fact died. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 348-349, and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 139-141.

Abu Bakr (RA) - The First Caliph

Supporting the Truth

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. At this time, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed to elect Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. This has been discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 3667 and 3668.

An important lesson to learn from this event is the importance of supporting others in matters of good. It is clear from this and other Hadiths that Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to choose someone else as their Caliph. In fact, he even named Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. This was the perfect opportunity for Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, to take the important role as the first representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without any arguments or problems. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, chose to do the right thing and help the Muslim nation by appointing the best person for the role. He did not worry that if he supported someone else his rank and social status would be reduced or he would be forgotten. In fact, his honour and social status only grew after this right choice.

Unfortunately, many Muslims and even Islamic institutions do not behave in this manner. They often only support those they have a relationship with instead of helping anyone who does something good. They behave as if their social status will be reduced if they support others in good things. Some have fallen even lower and support their friends and relatives in bad things and fail to support strangers who are doing good. This is a major reason why the Islamic community has weakened over time. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number but always fulfilled their duty by supporting each other in matters of good without worrying about anything else. Muslims must change their attitude and follow in their footsteps if they desire strength and respect in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

In addition, even though it was clear Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the preferred choice by even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet he did not nominate him explicitly. One of the reasons for this is that the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and nominating a new leader was a test from Allah, the Exalted. A test to see whether the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would argue and fight for leadership or submit sincerely to Allah, the Exalted, and nominate the best person for the role. As history clearly shows, they passed this test with flying colours. Therefore, it was a test for them, and a lesson for the future Muslims to always strive to aid others in what is good.

In addition, if he was appointed explicitly by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then some people in the future would have claimed that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were never unanimously pleased with his appointment and they only accepted it because they were commanded to do so. Therefore, avoiding an explicit command prevented this false belief as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were left to choose their leader under the implicit indications that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, should be the first Caliph of Islam. This further enhanced the right of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, as Caliph, as he was implicitly indicated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and independently appointed by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Burial of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Noblest Garden of Paradise

After the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were unsure where to bury him. Some suggested his Mosque in Medina and others suggested the main cemetery in Medina. It was Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who united them by declaring that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, say that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are buried in the same location they died. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, accepted this and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was buried in the location he died: the house of his wife, the mother of the believers, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1628.

No doubt the grave of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is within the greatest garden of Paradise. One should therefore reflect whether they will be placed in a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell when they descend into their grave, and therefore work accordingly to what they desire.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains

that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a Muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, Muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

Abu Bakr's (RA) First Sermon

Ambassadors of Islam

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away, the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. At this time the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed to elect Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam.

The day after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died, Abu Bakr sat on the pulpit while Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, gave a sermon. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "O people, yesterday I said things to you that were not appropriate. I did not find that in the Book of Allah, the Exalted, and that was not something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told me. But I thought that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would continue to lead us until he would be the last one of us to die. But Allah, the Exalted, has left amongst you His book in which is the guidance of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. if you adhere to it, Allah, the Exalted, will guide you to that to which He guided him. Allah, the Exalted, has united you under the leadership of the best among you, the Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the second of the two when they were in the cave, so get up and swear your allegiance to him."

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged the people to unite under the one who was most worthy of leading them, without showing any signs of envy. His actions avoided divisions and tribulations for the people and strengthened the Muslims for the oncoming difficulties they were destined to face. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 143.

In his first sermon, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said the following: "O people, I have assumed authority even though I am not the best of you (this showing his modesty as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were united in the belief of him being the best of them). If I do well, then help me. If I err, then set me straight. Honesty is loyalty; dishonesty is deceit. It is the weak among you who are powerful in my view until I can do away with their weakness. It is the strong among you who are weak until I can draw forth from them the right they owe people, if Allah, the Exalted, so wills it. No people abandons the fight for the cause of Allah, the Exalted, without Allah, the Exalted, afflicting them with degradation. Depravity never spreads over a people without Allah, the Exalted, making them experience calamity. Obey me for as long as I obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If I disobey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then I should expect no obedience from you. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 355-356.

This incident reminds Muslims of the very important position they have been appointed to by Allah, the Exalted, namely, the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands

of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

Unity

After being unanimously appointed as the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, tried to resign as he had no desire for leadership. He publicly made this plea and it was Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who stepped forward and made it clear that no one desired his resignation nor would they accept his resignation. He reiterated how the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed him ahead of everyone else in all situations, such as leading the congregational prayers during the final illness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 682. All the Companions agreed with Ali and insisted Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, lead them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Abu Bakr As Siddeeq*, Page 212.

Years later, during his Caliphate, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, would say that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was content with choosing Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead everyone in their religion (by leading them in the congregational prayers during the final illness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) and so all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were pleased with him to lead them in their worldly affairs also. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, *Tarikh Al Khulafa*, Page 5.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, behaved in this manner as they had been trained to become unified in matters of good by

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must strive to adopt these teachings so that they too become unified in the things pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised Muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thought and feeling it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feeling and if they strive to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second is when a

person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious Muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that Muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A Muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A Muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A Muslim should remember that other people are not perfect

just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a Muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess.

Another point must be made on this topic. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other Muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a Muslim to sever ties with another Muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another Muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a Muslim should continue to advise the other Muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other Muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

“...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression...”

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a Muslim should fulfil the following rights of other Muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other Muslims, have over them.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a Muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another Muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a Muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a Muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a Muslim to hate another Muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then a Muslim must show respect to

others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a Muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A Muslim must not violate any of these rights without a just reason. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim until they protect other people, including non-Muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not then justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Concentrating on More Relevant Issues

The nomination of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam has always been a topic of much debate. Rightly guided scholars have often abundantly discussed the overwhelming evidence of his right to be the first Caliph of Islam in order to unite the two groups on the truth: the Sunnis and the Shi'a. Even though this is a worthy aim, none the less, the average Muslim should not delve into these discussions or other similar discussions, such as the disagreements amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as these are issues Allah, the Exalted, will not ask them about on the Day of Judgement. These issues are between Allah, the Exalted, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 141:

“That is a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.”

A Muslim must firmly believe that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were rightly guided and that Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with all of them. This has been proven by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 100:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājireen (migrants from Mecca) and the Anṣār (residents of Medina) and those who followed

them with good conduct - Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”

As these issues will not be asked about on Judgement Day, a Muslim must instead concentrate on the things which will be asked about on Judgement Day. Only after a Muslim has fully understood and acted upon the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, do they have a right to address other issues. As virtually no one has reached this level, one must ensure they concentrate on the issues that are relevant, meaning, the issues which will determine whether they will go to Paradise or Hell.

In addition, the one who dislikes any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, should be afraid of becoming a disbeliever, as disbelievers dislike the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, according to the Holy Quran. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 29:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] pleasure. Their sign is in their faces from the effect of prostration [i.e., prayer]. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that He [i.e., Allāh] may enrage by them [the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them] the disbelievers...”

The one who dislikes them falls out of the three successful groups mentioned in the Holy Quran and is therefore doomed in both worlds. The first group are the Companions who migrated to Medina from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 8:

“...the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allāh and [His] approval and supporting [the cause of] Allāh and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful.”

The second group are the Companions from Medina, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 9:

“...those who were settled in the Home [Medina] and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

The final successful group are those who possess no negative feelings towards the Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and are instead their will-wishers. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

"...those who come after them, saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.""

Anyone who dislikes and criticizes any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, falls outside these three successful groups and is therefore doomed in both worlds.

A Fine Description of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The following are some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which all Muslims must strive to emulate. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

A Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 215, mentions the following characteristics. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always seemed to be worried as he spent much time pondering over the hereafter and the fate of his followers. He was always deep in thought. Because of this he never seemed fully relaxed. When he spoke he spoke clearly and slowly so he could easily be understood. He spoke concisely meaning, his few words contained an ocean's worth of knowledge. In fact, this was one of the miracles Allah, the Exalted, gifted

him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1167. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not short tempered nor did he insult or disgrace others. He was always grateful for all the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, even if they appeared small. He never criticized food. He was never angered over worldly things. But he was greatly angered when the limits of Allah, the Exalted, were crossed but even then he always remained just and merciful. The laugh of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a smile.

In a Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 227, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed that he sometimes joked but always spoke the truth. Unfortunately, some Muslims seem to believe that it is acceptable to tell small lies which are termed white lies. But this is not true. All lies must be avoided as the Holy Quran has cursed those who lie. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 61:

“...and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].”

In fact, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared three curses for the one who lies while joking. If this is the case for lying while joking can one imagine the consequences of lying while deceiving others? The one who does not lie even when joking has been promised a castle in the middle of Paradise. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4800.

Part of the noble character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was his zeal for worshipping Allah, the Exalted. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7124, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to offer such extensive voluntary prayers at night that his blessed feet would become swollen. When questioned about this he simply replied that he desired to be a grateful servant. Even though, such ardent worship is not expected from Muslims none the less each person should strive according to their own capacity to prove their gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. This is best achieved by using every blessing such as physical strength according to the teachings of Islam.

The great humility of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is very well known. It is a key characteristic of true servanthood and the opposite of it namely, pride, will be a cause of one entering Hell even if they only possess an atom's worth of it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, demonstrated humility throughout his blessed life. For example, a Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 315, advises that he visited the sick irrespective of if they were poor or not. He attended funerals and accepted the invitation of all especially, the poor. Throughout history these characteristics have always been looked down upon by those who possess pride. But Islam teaches Muslims to fulfil these duties and others as they can become a cause of them entering Paradise. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2374.

A lengthy Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 319, highlights the humility, and simplicity of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should bear in mind simplicity is a part of faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was at

home he split his time into three portions. The first was dedicated to the worship of Allah, the Exalted. The second was dedicated to fulfilling the rights of his family members. And the final portion was for himself meaning, for rest. This last part he split into two and dedicated half of it to the general public and their needs. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always fulfilled the needs of the people even if it put himself in difficulty. He would always talk to people according to their level of knowledge and only discuss things which would benefit people. Whenever people gathered with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only beneficial things were discussed and all avoided vain talk. People always departed from his gatherings learning something new which benefited them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only uttered words which were useful and necessary and disliked vain and pointless talk. Whoever visited him felt at ease and welcomed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always showed respect to all and always avoided harming others in any way. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always concerned about the affairs of others and strived to rectify their problems. He praised good deeds and encouraged them. He explained the negative effects of bad things and strived to remove them. He followed the middle path avoiding excessive behaviour and laziness in order to set a perfect example for mankind. The best person in the sight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the one who desired good for others and strived in helping them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, began and ended his conversations and gatherings by remembering Allah, the Exalted. When he attended a gathering he sat wherever there was space and never caused an inconvenience to others. But wherever he sat it became the head and focus of the gathering. He always fulfilled the rights of those he met and sat with. Each person believed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, honoured them the most. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would only leave a conversation when the other person's request was fulfilled to their satisfaction. He always fulfilled the needs of others. He always treated people with cheerfulness. All people were equal in his sight as far as their rights were concerned meaning, he did not give priority to some over

others for worldly reasons. His gatherings were about beneficial knowledge, modesty, patience and truthfulness. All were honoured and no one was embarrassed in these gatherings. He covered the faults of others and pointed out mistakes without naming people directly. One was only seen to have more virtue in his gatherings if they feared Allah, the Exalted, more than others. The young were shown mercy and love by him. The poor were treated kindly and their needs were fulfilled. Strangers and travellers were always taken care of by him.

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2015, advises that the Companion, Anas Bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, served the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for ten years and in this time the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never got angry with him if he failed to do a task he set him.

The wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the mother of the believers, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, advised that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never spoke indecently nor did he use foul language nor did he speak loudly. Whenever he was offended by others he did not take revenge instead he forgave and overlooked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 330.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never struck a woman, a child or a male civilian. The only time he fought was for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in self-defence against Male soldiers. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050.

A lengthy Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 334, discusses some of the blessed characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He was always cheerful with people and easy mannered. He often smiled. He was very soft natured. He never spoke harshly to others nor did he possess a harsh heart. He never uttered vulgar or disrespectful words. He never sought the faults of others. He never criticised things nor did he over praise things. He rarely joked but never exceeded the limits. He was not stingy. If he disagreed with someone's wish he never disheartened them when explaining the better choice to them. He completely kept away from three things: from arguing with others, pride and vain talk. He did not dishonour or insult others nor seek the faults of others and only spoke about beneficial things. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always remained patient in the face of abuse and the harshness of others. He did not interrupt people when they were speaking.

A Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 335, mentions the extreme generous nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whenever anyone requested something beneficial from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he never denied them.

He was so generous that as mentioned in a Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 337, he never stored any provisions for himself for the next day as he always gave it away in charity.

His generosity reached such heights that even when he possessed nothing to give to others he would advise the asker to take anything from

the local market and tell the merchant that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will pay for the thing after. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 338.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always repaid others for their acts of kindness and gifts. A Hadith found in Shama'il E Tirmidhi, number 339, mentions that once the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was given a tray of fruits as a gift. In response the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave that person a handful of jewellery.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been more terrorized for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, than him. He was subjected to such difficulties that for thirty days he could only obtain a few morsels of food. In fact, months used to pass and nothing would be cooked in the house of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He and his family would sustain themselves on water and date fruits. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2567. This does not mean one should not eat. But Muslims should firstly appreciate what they have. Secondly, they should enjoy the material world within the limits of Islam by avoiding extravagance, waste and excessiveness.

Conclusion

When one observes the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will clearly see that he was tested every step of his life, even though he was the most beloved creation of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a test and difficulty is not a curse or a sign of a wretched life. It is in fact an opportunity for a person to shine and accumulate an abundant reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

One must bear this in mind whenever they face tests and difficulties so that they can remain patient and grateful, like he did.

Furthermore, even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, faced continuous difficulties and tests yet throughout every stage his heart was at peace. This peace was obtained as he persistently used the blessings he was granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And 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.”

But the one who fails to imitate him will find nothing but a dark and suffocating life, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

“But whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life...”

Therefore, using the blessings one has been granted correctly is the difference between obtaining peace of mind and a miserable life, even if one faces difficulties or times of ease.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dedicated his life to guiding mankind towards the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who remained steadfast on

his teachings after his passing. All Muslims desire his company in the hereafter but they will only receive it if they follow his path. A person will not end up with their companion who journeyed along a specific path if they journey down a different path. Similarly, Muslims will not join the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter if they walk a path other than his. This is only achieved by learning and acting on his blessed life and teachings. This is the reason why none of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, simply declared belief with their words and refrained from practically following him, as they knew this attitude would prevent them from joining him in the hereafter. This was in fact the attitude of the other nations who claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet fail to practically follow them. This is why they will not join their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, in the hereafter.

Also, when observing the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and by extension the lives of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, one understands that the only way a person can have a meaningful, valuable and purposeful existence is by fulfilling the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

This is only achieved when one practically obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, which is explained by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Simply declaring faith verbally without supporting it with physical actions is like a vase which looks

beautiful outwardly but is hollow inside. This will not lead to a meaningful existence in this life, even if one ends up in Paradise in the hereafter. This is hinted in a Hadith found in At Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, Hadith 182, Volume 20, which warns that the only thing a person will regret in Paradise are the times during their life on Earth when they did not remember Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the times during their life they did not fulfil their purpose of creation by correctly using the blessings they were granted. This is the reason why many Muslims, who only fulfill the basic obligatory duties, still feel a void in their lives, a void that nothing can fulfill except embracing one's purpose completely and practically.

In addition, generally speaking, people become pleased when they inherit worldly things, such as wealth from others. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not leave behind wealth for people to inherit. He, like the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, left behind knowledge. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 223. Therefore, Muslims must take a share of this inheritance if they desire to be his true heirs.

Finally, the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the perfect example of how a Muslim must fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation. He is the practical representation of the Holy Quran.

Therefore, Muslims must study and act on his blessed life in order to fulfil their duties correctly. Success is not possible without this. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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