

Benefits of faith

PodSeries - Vol 43



Achieve Noble Character

Benefits of Faith

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BENEFITS OF FAITH

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Compiler's Notes](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The Friendship and Love of Allah, the Exalted](#)

[The Approval of Allah, the Exalted](#)

[The Protection of Allah, the Exalted](#)

[Escape from Difficulties](#)

[A Good Life](#)

[Contentment](#)

[Peace of Mind & Body](#)

[The Acceptance of Good Deeds](#)

[Right Guidance](#)

[Encourages Patience](#)

[Raising of Ranks](#)

[Superiority and Success](#)

[No Fear or Grief](#)

[Gaining Benefit from Advice](#)

[Gaining Benefit from the Signs of Allah, the Exalted](#)

[Doubts are Eliminated](#)

[Encourages Sincere Repentance](#)

[Prevents Persistence on Major Sins](#)

[Encourages Good Relations with People](#)

[Protection from Hell](#)

[Obtaining Paradise](#)

[Faith is the Recourse of the True Believer](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[A Special Request](#)

[Sign up for ShaykhPod Books's Mailing List](#)

[Also By ShaykhPod Books](#)

All praises are for Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds, who has given us the inspiration, opportunity and strength to complete this volume. Blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad whose path has been chosen by Allah, the Exalted, for the salvation of mankind.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the entire ShaykhPod family, especially our little star, Yusuf, whose continued support and advice has inspired the development of ShaykhPod Books.

We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some worldly and hereafter benefits of possessing true faith in Islam meaning, faith which is supported by actions. In reality, all goodness in this life and the next and avoidance of all evil are the outcome of true faith in Islam. Understanding the benefits of true faith will encourage a muslim to strive harder in actualizing their faith which undoubtedly leads to Noble Character.

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

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

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

The Friendship and Love of Allah, the Exalted

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that He is the friend of those who truly believe. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 257:

“Allah is the Ally of those who believe...”

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.

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]...”

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that a muslim can only draw close to Him through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins....”

The pious muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid unnecessary things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

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.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who

possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

The Approval of Allah, the Exalted

Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 72:

“Allah has promised the believing men and believing women... approval from Allah is greater...”

It is important to note that a muslim will only obtain the approval of Allah, the Exalted, after they sincerely approve His choices in respect to their lives by obeying Him in all situations.

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.”

The Protection of Allah, the Exalted

Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 38:

“Indeed, Allah defends those who have believed...”

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares some important things. The first thing mentioned is that Allah, the Exalted, declares war on the person who shows enmity to one of His righteous friends.

This occurs as the one who shows enmity to a person's friend is in fact showing enmity to the person indirectly. This indirectly warns muslims to only befriend the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, and to never show any enmity or dislike for them as this is the attitude of the enemies of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Devil. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 1:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies...”

It is important to note, that any form of disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is waging war against Him. Therefore, a muslim should avoid all forms of disobedience including disliking those who strive in obeying Him as this only invites the anger of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, that a person should never insult his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as insulting them is like insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and

whoever harms him has insulted Allah, the Exalted. And this sinful person will soon be punished unless they sincerely repent.

The next thing mentioned in the main 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.

Escape from Difficulties

Allah, the Exalted, has promised to rescue the believers just like how he rescued the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him, after he was swallowed by a whale. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 87-88:

“...And he called out within the darkneses, "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that Allah, the Exalted, will respond to and rescue any believer who uses the supplication made by the Holy Prophet Yunus, peace be upon him.

According to the following verse a muslim has been guaranteed right guidance through all difficulties and success in all aspects of their life as long as they actualise their faith meaning, they fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

A Good Life

It is important for muslims to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed a good life in both worlds for the one who behaves in this manner. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

This good life will protect a muslim from severe grief, depression and other extreme moods and mental disorders which can destroy a person's life. Even though, muslims will face difficulties which will sadden them but if they obey Allah, the Exalted, this sadness will never become extreme and effect their entire life on a long term basis. This is because a muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, has an excellent reason to continue moving forward through their difficulty without giving up and turning to depression and even suicide. For example, they look forward to the countless reward which will be granted to the patient. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Whereas, the muslim who does not strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and only claims the title of being a muslim with their tongue will not be granted this attitude and a good life. And whenever they face difficulties it will drive them to extreme moods and mental disorders which will destroy their entire life.

Contentment

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.

Peace of Mind & Body

It is a universal aim and goal for all people, irrespective of their faith or social class, to achieve peace of mind in this world. It is the ultimate reason why people strive in this material world, work long hours and dedicate the majority of their efforts to this world. People desire to obtain such a life whereby they have no stresses or worries such as financial difficulties. But it is strange how people, especially muslims, look for peace of mind in the wrong place. Just like a person who desires to watch a football game yet, goes to a cricket match. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that true peace of mind only lies in His obedience which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to

a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

The Acceptance of Good Deeds

Righteous deeds are only rewarded in both worlds when one actualizes their faith so that they perform righteous deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 94:

“So whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer - no denial will there be for his effort...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that deeds should be done correctly, sincerely and moderately. He added that a person’s deeds will not take them to Paradise and concluded that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are those which are regular even if they are few.

Muslims should ensure that they perform deeds correctly meaning, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as performing deeds without this guidance will lead one away from the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

Next, they must perform them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and not for any other reason, such as showing off. These people 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.

Muslims should perform voluntary righteous deeds moderately without overburdening themselves as this often leads to one giving up. Instead, they should act according to their capacity and means regularly even if these actions are little in size and number as this is far superior to big actions which are performed once in a while.

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

Righteous deeds without faith are rewarded in this world by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 145:

“...And whoever desires the reward of this world - We will give him thereof...”

But reward in the hereafter requires faith and without it deeds will have no value. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 23:

“And We will approach [i.e., regard] what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed.”

The reason for this that these deeds were founded on other than the belief in Islam, the spirit of which is to have perform good deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and to follow the conduct of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 65:

“...if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.”

Right Guidance

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.

In addition, those who actualise their faith will be granted the ability to use every blessing they possess in the correct way so that they receive reward and further blessings in both worlds. In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can

paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

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

Encourages Patience

People face trials and difficulties in every moment of their lives but having faith and certainty serves to comfort and console them. Actualizing faith helps one adopt patience so that they obtain an uncountable reward.

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 register¹ 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.

Raising of Ranks

Chapter 58 Al Mujadila, verse 11:

“...Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees...”

Allah, the Exalted, raises those who actualize their faith and knowledge in both worlds. They have the greatest rank with Allah, the Exalted, and in the sight of His creation.

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.

Superiority and Success

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.

No Fear or Grief

Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 48:

“...So whoever believes and reforms - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

This verse also indicates the importance of supporting one's internal belief with righteous actions. One without the other will not lead to true success and the blessings mentioned in this verse. It is one of the reasons why the muslim nation is facing such difficulties as many declare Islam with their tongues but struggle to act on its teachings. This attitude does not and will not relieve them of fear and grief which is quite evident when one observes the media and the state of the muslim nation. Those who fulfil both aspects have been promised a reward which has not been enumerated nor restricted in anyway. This indicates that their reward will be unimaginable and it will affect every aspect of their worldly and religious lives. These muslims will not fear anything except Allah, the Exalted, and will successfully overcome all difficulties in both worlds without fearing them as they have been extended protection and safety by Allah, the Exalted. This verse does not mean they will not encounter sadness during difficulties but it means that their sadness will never push them towards extreme sadness namely, grief, which often leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as impatience. Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a balanced state of mind whereby they experience happiness without becoming proud and sadness without experiencing grief. This is an important aspect of dealing with both times of ease and difficulties successfully.

Gaining Benefit from Advice

Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 55:

“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”

Faith leads a person to adhere firmly to the truth and follow it at all times in both speech and actions. Because of this there is nothing preventing them from accepting advice and acting on it. Whoever does not actualize their faith easily rejects the truth. This is why Allah, the Exalted, tells us that it is disbelief itself that prevents a non-muslim from believing in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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.

Gaining Benefit from the Signs of Allah, the Exalted

Chapter 15 Al Hjr, verse 77:

“Indeed in that is a sign for the believers.”

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.

Doubts are Eliminated

Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 15:

“The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not...”

Doubts affect many muslims and can become a detriment to their Islam. But actualizing faith eliminates all doubts. Faith combats the doubts that are implanted by the Devil and people.

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...”

Encourages Sincere Repentance

Chapter 66 At Tahrīm, verse 8:

“O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance...”

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.

Prevents Persistence on Major Sins

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 31:

“If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins and admit you to a noble entrance [into Paradise].”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4873, that a person does not believe when they are fornicating, drinking alcohol, stealing or killing someone.

Whoever persists in committing major sins does so because they fail to actualize their faith. This allows a muslim to commit these sins even though they are aware that Allah, the Exalted, is watching them. Actualizing faith creates a sense of shame and modesty from Allah, the Exalted, love of Him, hope in His reward, fear of His punishment and a light that prevents one from persisting on major sins.

Encourages Good Relations with People

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.

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

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

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the

owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

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

Protection from Hell

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

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

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the

moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

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

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

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

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

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

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, Muslims have been commanded to follow him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

Obtaining Paradise

Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 72:

“Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence...”

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.

Faith is the Recourse of the True Believer

A muslim recurses to their faith in all situations such as joy, sorrow, distress, fear, security, obedience and disobedience.

At times of joy and ease a true believer praises Allah, the Exalted, practically by using the blessings they have received in ways pleasing to Him. This leads to a great reward and further blessings in both worlds.

At times of distress a believer actualises their faith by taking comfort and support in the uncountable reward given to the patient who remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

At times of fear a true believer actualizes their faith by remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, which leads to the strengthening of their faith. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 173:

“Those to whom people [i.e., hypocrites] said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them." But it [merely] increased them in faith...”

At times of security a believer actualizes their faith which prevents them from becoming arrogant. Instead they humble themselves knowing that all good comes from none other than Allah, the Exalted.

At times of obedience a true believer actualizes their faith by acknowledging the favor of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of inspiration, strength, opportunity and the acceptance of their righteous deeds. This prevents pride an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. They plead to Allah, the Exalted, for the acceptance of their deeds knowing that righteous deeds only have value when Allah, the Exalted, accepts them.

At times of disobedience the believer actualizes their faith by rushing towards sincere repentance and they perform more righteous deeds in order to make up for their lapse in judgement.

Therefore, true believers who actualize their faith always recourse back to their faith and continuously strive in the obedience of 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.

Conclusion

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.

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