

Captured Thoughts on Noble Character

PodThought – Complete Series



Achieve Noble Character

Captured Thoughts on Noble Character: Complete Series

PodThought

ShaykhPod Books

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CAPTURED THOUGHTS ON NOBLE CHARACTER: COMPLETE SERIES

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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 book discusses some thoughts and the lessons one can learn from them in order to Achieve Noble Character.

According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgement 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.

Obtaining Peace

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

“So remember Me; I will remember you.”

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

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

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

It is quite obvious that people strive in this material world as they desire peace of mind and contentment. In light of the earlier discussion, peace in one's life is often achieved when a person allows others to live in peace. If one reflects on their own life they will realise that people can be split into two categories: those who mind their business and allow others to live in peace and those who do not. It does not take a genius to figure out that those who let others live in peace are the ones who gain peace. Whereas, members of the other group never find peace irrespective of how many worldly blessings they may possess. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in

Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976, that a muslim cannot perfect their Islam until they avoid things which do not concern them. Those who ignore this advice and busy themselves with interfering with other people are the ones who never find peace. As they deprive others of peace in turn Allah, the Exalted, deprives them of it.

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

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

The Help of Allah, the Exalted

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the verse of the Holy Quran found in 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.

Let Things Go

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over something which all muslims hope for. They all 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.”

Adapting Behavior

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the bad characteristic of stubbornness and its negative effects on the one who possesses it and those around them. Even though this characteristic can lead to many problems only a major one will be discussed. 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.

Be the Best

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, and what made them 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.

Broken Relationships

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I pondered over the fact that many families, especially from the Asian community, become fractured and even broken over time. This is one of the biggest complaints relatives, such as parents, often have. They wonder why their children have become divided after being so firmly joined.

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 in most cases they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on a person'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.

Certainty of Faith

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the following verse of the Holy Quran: 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...”

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.

Different Paths

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the countless people in this world and the countless different paths they are journeying down. This in itself is an indication of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Even though, there are billions of people yet no two people walk the exact same path in life. Understanding these signs strengthens one's faith but this chapter will discuss something else.

Whenever a muslim finds themselves on a lawful path they should firstly show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He alone granted them in the way prescribed by Islam. The other important thing is that a muslim should never look down on others believing that their path is somehow superior to the path of others especially those who are on a lawful path also. This only leads to pride which will lead one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266. Instead, they should firstly understand that they are unaware of the final outcome of their life or the lives of others. Someone on an unlawful path can easily sincerely repent and be saved before death.

Secondly, in the case of others on a lawful path a muslim should understand that each person has been granted the best path for them which differs from the best possible path of others. For example, one muslim may spend most of their time in a Mosque and another muslim may spend most of their time on lawful worldly things, such as an occupation. The first muslim is not better than the second as each person is on the best path for them. If they swapped places it would most likely lead them to destruction. For example, if they swapped the one who now spends time in a Mosque could adopt pride and thus be destroyed. So it is better for them to be involved in lawful worldly things. On the other hand, the other muslim who now dedicates most of their time to the material world could get lost in it and head towards the unlawful. So it would be better for this muslim to spend most of their time in a Mosque.

Therefore, muslims should never be jealous nor look down upon each other as each person is on the best possible path for them, as long as this path is lawful. This attitude will always lead to humility and mutual love for each other and according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510, sincerely loving each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a characteristic which leads one to Paradise. It is important to note, this discussion does not mean one should not try to improve themselves by acting on the teachings of Islam. It means they should be happy for others who are journeying down a lawful path.

Criticism and Praise

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over how some people become overly sad when they are criticised. 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.

Hoping in People

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common thing many people do namely, placing hope in people. The problem with this attitude is that as people are not Angels they are bound to make mistakes and fall short of people's expectations and hopes. In addition, as times change and each person progresses along their own path, which is separate from the path of all others, it will cause them to become preoccupied with their own things, such as their responsibilities. This change often causes them to let down the people who place hope in them even if they do not mean to do this. Hoping in people who are not perfect will generally lead to disappointment. A common example of this especially, in the Asian community, is when parents place hope in their children. They hope that their children will choose the path in life they advise them to and hope their children will make taking care of their parents their ultimate priority. Even though, children should definitely take care of their parents as this is their duty, parents should not place their hope in them as this can often result in disappointment. People should instead fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and towards people as Allah, the Exalted, has commanded, and then place hope in Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should never forget that the source of all help is Allah, the Exalted, and the creation are only a means. The source can still help them even without the means they have in mind if He so chooses. But the means by themselves cannot help without the Source. If muslims place their focus and hope on the means then they will be disappointed. But if they place it on the Source then nothing can prevent them from gaining the support of Allah, the Exalted.

So it is important for muslims to place their hope in the correct place which must be supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, then they will find the peace of mind and satisfaction they desire in both worlds.

Religion and World Hand in Hand

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Some muslims often claim that one's faith and the material world need to walk hand in hand with each other without a person being extreme in either. It is strange how most of those who claim this and use this statement as a way to enjoy the lawful luxuries and pleasures of this world do not truly understand nor adhere to it. This statement is true but applies to those worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, occasionally exercising in order to keep the body healthy which is a trust given to a person. It does not mean one can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world in excess while neglecting following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge even if they fulfil the standard obligatory duties. As gaining knowledge in itself is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

In addition, walking hand in hand would suggest that one dedicates equal attention, effort and time to each thing. How many muslims can honestly say that they dedicate equal effort, energy and time to the material world and preparing for the hereafter? If they do not, and most do not, then how exactly are they fulfilling this statement?

A muslim should not fool themselves as their time on Earth is limited and they will not be given a second chance once they depart from it. Therefore, they should honestly strive to fulfil this statement by at least dedicating equal time, effort and energy to both the material world and preparing for the hereafter. It is important to note, that some would argue that treating a temporary abode and an everlasting abode equal is not wise.

Do Elders Know Best

I had a thought which I wanted to share. The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.

Refocus Through Loss

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a specific wisdom why people face difficulties and the loss of blessings, such as health. Often when muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a muslim's attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

Is It Useful

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often complain about feeling disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they attend religious gatherings and listen to religious lectures. One of the main reasons this occurs is because they have adopted the incorrect attitude which contradicts the attitude of the righteous predecessors. They take part in these activities looking for lawful entertainment. They do not intend to seek and act upon beneficial knowledge in order to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which leads to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of the righteous predecessors who only intended the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, in all their activities. A good way to determine whether one is acting with the right attitude is by assessing themselves after taking part in the activity. If they gained useful knowledge or were reminded of useful knowledge which inspires them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then it is useful. If this does not occur then either the religious gathering or lecture has a fault in it or the listener has a fault in their intention. Either way they have not fulfilled the main purpose of religious gatherings or lectures. A muslim should avoid gatherings and lectures which concentrate more on entertainment such as telling stories which may fascinate the crowd but have no beneficial lessons in them. Only through attending the correct gatherings with the correct intention will a muslim achieve the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise they are merely taking part in gatherings of entertainment which will not improve their character nor will they increase them in the obedience and closeness of Allah, the Exalted.

Balance is Best

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the importance of maintaining a balanced life whereby a muslim fulfils their necessities and responsibilities in this world, prepares adequately for the hereafter and occasionally enjoys lawful pleasures. Even though, this is the best approach it is very difficult to fulfil just like walking a tight rope whereby a person can easily fall into either of the two extremes. One side is when one is too focused on the material world which prevents them from striving in preparing for the hereafter correctly. The other side is where one strives hard in preparing for the hereafter but struggles and even fails to fulfil their worldly duties. But it is important to note, that even though a perfect balance is best it is far better to incline towards the hereafter than this material world. As the one who favours the hereafter might find this world difficult but they are more likely to achieve eternal success in the hereafter. On the other hand, the one who inclines to the world more may find success therein but they are more likely to fail in the hereafter. In other words, inclining towards the hereafter is the safer option compared to inclining towards the material world. So if a muslim struggles to find the perfect balance, which the vast majority do, they should be kind to themselves and incline more towards the hereafter so that they can obtain eternal success instead of temporary worldly success. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life, While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

Being Busy

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often claim that due to their busy lives they do not find time to perform voluntary righteous deeds or even gain further knowledge on Islam. In cases like this a muslim should strive to donate as much charity as possible as this righteous deed does not take much time and it is a huge branch of faith. There are countless virtues of donating charity which have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to people, close to Paradise and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is close to Hell, far from Allah, the Exalted, far from people and far from Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

In addition, as long as a muslim benefits others through their charity even if they are preoccupied with worldly things Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. This help from Allah, the Exalted, will extend to every aspect of one's life and in both worlds. It is important to note this charity does not need to be a huge amount of wealth. One should strive to give regularly and according to their means even if it is small in amount as Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity but quality. In addition, these Hadiths and others do not declare that the charity has to be a great amount either.

To conclude, ideally a muslim should make time in order to fulfil all the different branches of faith. But if they are too preoccupied with the material world they should at least fulfil this important branch with the obligatory duties hoping through it Allah, the Exalted, will grant them salvation on the Last Day.

Ultimate Goal

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the different difficulties and times of ease people face throughout their lives. There are things which a muslim can remember in order to maintain their focus on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One of those things is to remember a fact which is supported by a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7088. It indicates that the person who ends up in Paradise will not be bothered by the difficulties they faced during their life on Earth. And the person who ends up in Hell will not feel better when they are reminded of the luxuries they enjoyed during their life on Earth.

A person should not be fooled into thinking the hereafter is like this world. In this world difficulties bother people even after the difficulties pass. And the moments when a person enjoyed luxuries can make them feel better even if they are in prison. But this is not the case in respect to the hereafter. So a muslim should remember this fact when they are facing difficulties knowing it will not bother them at all if they end up in Paradise. And sins, vain things and the luxuries of this world will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell.

This attitude is a strong mechanism which encourages a muslim towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, if they ponder on it often.

Fulfil Your Wish

I had a thought which I wanted to share. There are many muslims who desire lawful things, such as a child and instead of being content with what Allah, the Exalted, chose for them they instead pursue their desires in lawful ways such as spiritual exercises based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is obviously permissible in Islam. Yet, after all this effort and stress they do not understand nor act on a simple but profound teaching of Islam which would aid them in their quest. In fact, they often act in certain ways which only reduces the chances of their request being fulfilled. For example, a muslim does not need to be a scholar to understand that it is less likely for a muslim to obtain what they desire if the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed from them. For Example, this can occur when one lies in order to make others laugh. In fact, this person has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315. A curse results in the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Some of these muslims who desperately desire things from Allah, the Exalted, also backbite and slander others. This also leads to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

There are many other examples which lead to the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn dramatically reduces the chances of one's request being fulfilled. Muslims should therefore act on this important principle by seeking and acting on knowledge before seeking other means such as spiritual exercises in order to fulfil their lawful desires as these things will not aid them in fulfilling their requests until they correct their behaviour.

What Do You Seek?

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Ties that Bind

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a mentality which many people especially, Asians possess. It is the extreme need in forcing people such as relatives to remain physically together. Even though, it is not an evil intention yet, in this day and age it often leads to more trouble than good. As people are not perfect they will make mistakes which upset others such as their relatives. But if this person only met and conversed with their relatives once in a while there is a much greater chance the mistake will be overlooked by others so that it does not become a point of argument. But if this same person was constantly around their relatives it would be much more likely their attitude and behaviour would lead to arguments and friction amongst their relatives. In other words, a person is less likely to argue and more likely to be tolerant with someone they only see once in a while than someone they are always around. This is a fact which everyone will understand if they ponder over it. Unfortunately, some people do not understand that it is better to be physically separated but be at peace with one another than be together in conflict and friction. Arguments only lead to mental separation which often has more of a negative effect on families than physical separation. Whereas, being physically separated does not lead to a mental separation. In fact, it often leads to greater mutual respect and appreciation. As the famous saying goes separation makes the heart grow fonder.

It is important to note, that it is the duty of a muslim to uphold their ties of kinship irrespective of if they are physically with their relatives or not. But this discussion means that muslims should not believe a bit of physical separation between people is a bad thing. It in fact can be a cause for the bonds between them to strengthen.

Make Problems Small

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the great tests and difficulties the righteous predecessors faced during their lives and how they overcame them through patience and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. One of the ways of achieving this is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift they 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.

Aim High

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a powerful weapon and trap of the Devil which can affect every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith. The Devil tries to convince muslims to always observe those who are worse than them in behaviour in order to justify their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and improving their character and behaviour for the better. For example, a muslim who offers their obligatory prayers once in a while will observe someone who does not pray at all in order to make themselves feel better. A thief will look at a murderer and convince themselves stealing is not so bad. The examples are endless. It is very strange how these muslims so easily observe those who appear worse than them in order to justify their lack of effort in obeying Allah, the Exalted, but these same people will not observe those who are in a worse off position than them when they face difficulties. For example, the person who suffers from back pain will not observe the one who is physically disabled so that it prevents them from complaining. This attitude has specifically been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In addition, if observing those who appear worse in their behaviour does not save one from punishment in a worldly court, such as a thief being pardoned by a judge because there are many murderers in the world, how can one imagine this excuse will hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted?

Muslims should therefore avoid this trap of the Devil by observing those who appear better than them so that they are inspired to improve their character and behaviour progressively for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is what Allah, the Exalted, demands meaning, He does not demand perfection.

Key to Happiness

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Many people set the standards for their happiness according to the rules and desires of other people. The problem with this mentality is that one will become sad or happy depending on the desires of people. If they persist on this attitude than they reach a level where they love, hate, give, withhold and act according to the desires of people. This attitude will only lead to overall sadness in one's life as truly pleasing others is unattainable. People are not pleased with Allah, the Exalted, when He granted them countless blessings how can they possibly be pleased with people who innately gave them nothing? So living with the attitude of always aiming to please others will only result in sadness.

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

Sharing Problems

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about a certain mentality which some muslims have adopted. It is when a person tells many people about their 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...”

Saving You

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

Expectations

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for muslims in all aspects of their life to always set realistic expectations as setting unrealistic expectations always leads to disappointment, sadness, grief and depression which are the ingredients for impatience and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This only leads to further trouble in both worlds. For example, muslims should reject the fantasy created by Bollywood by believing their marriage will be like a fairy-tale. This is a ridiculous and unrealistic expectation which will only lead to disappointment. Whereas, if one understands that marriage has difficulties but is willing to work through them then they are more likely to achieve happiness and peace of mind.

In addition, a muslim should set realistic expectations according to their own situation and life meaning, they should not observe others and set their expectations according to their standards. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

In reality, a true muslim will not set expectations in respect to people as they would only rely and trust in Allah, the Exalted. But this is a high and rare status to achieve. Therefore, if a muslim must set expectations in respect to people they should make them realistic otherwise they will only lead to disappointment, grief and depression.

Fear of Losing

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is part of normal behaviour to fear losing one's possessions. In fact, generally speaking the more one possesses the more they will fear losing them and the less they possess the less they will fear. This is just like the person who goes out in the middle of the night while possessing many valuable things, such as an expensive phone and tablet. This person will obviously have more fear of losing their possessions than the one who leaves their home in the middle of the night while carrying nothing valuable. Muslims should therefore understand the reality of this in respect to this temporal world and the eternal hereafter. The one who possesses much worldly things which will not benefit them in the hereafter, such as excess wealth they have hoarded will always fear leaving this world through death and the troubles of this world more than the one who possesses less worldly things. This fear removes the very aim of these possessions which is to achieve peace of mind and body. In fact, achieving peace of mind and body is the very reason people strive in this material world. But in order to remove this fear a muslim does not need to become physically empty handed. They only need to detach from their possessions spiritually. This is achieved when one only takes from this material world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents and then dedicates the rest of their worldly blessings towards the hereafter by using them as prescribed by Islam. This will ensure that they truly own their possessions instead of their belongings possessing them. This will also remove the fear of losing their possessions as they have already sent them forward to the hereafter for safe keeping. This will allow them to achieve peace of mind and body in this world and in the next.

Missing Things

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for muslims to firmly believe that they will not intensely miss anything they give up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, whether the thing is unlawful or lawful but unnecessary. One should not fall for the whisperings of the Devil by believing otherwise as he has made it his mission to misguide people. For example, whenever a muslim is inspired to donate charity the Devil quickly warns and frightens them with poverty which in many cases causes a muslim to change their mind even though they fully believe they will not become poor donating some of their wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

“Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

A muslim should act on the other half of this verse and instead trust that Allah, the Exalted, will replace the thing they give up for His sake with something much better. Those who have experienced this know the truth of this statement but those who have not must review history and observe how those who gave things up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, succeeded in both worlds. For example, the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, namely, Imam Hasan Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, gave up authority in order to save the lives of countless people for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. His action had in fact been prophesied in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3629. In exchange Allah, the Exalted, granted him blessings and reward far beyond any position of authority could give him. For example, he has been declared the leader of the youth of Paradise in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3768. It is as if he gave up leadership in this world and was granted a greater authority in the next world.

As long as a muslim is sincere in their action Allah, the Exalted, will replace what they give up for His sake with something much better. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

Moulding Life

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Seeking Good

I had a thought which I wanted to share. According to an incident which has been recorded in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 510, the great Companion Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, refused to give his daughter's hand in marriage to a rich and powerful person. He advised that he only did this as he feared his daughter would get lost in the excess and luxuries of this world which would undoubtedly damage her faith.

It is strange how the majority of muslims have adopted the opposite mindset to this. And often seek rich and influential people in order to join ties with. They are often less concerned about the strength of their faith and therefore fail to connect with families for this reason which has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3635. Even though, a family should not marry in to a family which cannot financially support their relative but at the same time they should not set wealth and social status as their only benchmark for finding a suitable spouse for their relative.

This incident shows the importance of always seeking good for others by considering faith in all situations and circumstances. Meaning, one should only get into situations when they firmly believe their faith will either strengthen through it or at least not become damaged because of it. If they suspect this may occur they should avoid it at all costs as all worldly things come and go but the strength of one's faith is the thing that will define their ultimate and permanent destination in the hereafter therefore, it should always be protected.

Spiritual High

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often have periods within their lives where they exert themselves by increasing the amount of worship they perform. This often happens in the Holy month of Ramadan where muslims decide to change their lives around by striving much harder than normal. The issue with exerting too much effort in a short period of time is that it often leads to one giving up and returning back to normal. First of all, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned muslims in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 43, not to over burden themselves and only perform voluntary deeds which they can handle. He concluded by declaring that the most beloved of deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the ones done regularly irrespective of their size. Muslims should therefore adhere to this advice as it is more likely they keep up their obedience over a longer period of time.

In reality, the important time is not the period where one feels a spiritual high and exerts extra effort. The important time is when one returns back to normal as spiritual highs very rarely last. Muslims must ensure that no matter how much they return from a spiritual high they must continue fulfilling their obligatory duties. Then they should dedicate some time to learning and acting on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Changing step by step like this is much better than exerting extra effort over a short period of time and there is a greater chance that one will maintain their improved obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the long term if they change gradually, step by step. No one is demanding muslims to become saints overnight. Improvement takes time but this means that one should not stand still and actually take small but regular steps to improve their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Rejected Advice

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to note that one should react correctly whenever their advice is not acted upon. When the person seeking advice chooses an unlawful decision which contradicts the advice given to them the advisor should show dislike towards their choice as this is a branch of faith. In fact, disliking something for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then they must stay within the limits of Islam when showing their dislike.

If the choices are between two lawful options and their advice is not acted upon then they should not become annoyed at the one seeking advice as they chose a lawful choice. They should instead respect their decision and not harbour any ill feelings for them nor outwardly show any signs of annoyance, such as telling them they told them so if their decision does not work out for them. People are not Angels they will make mistakes so it is best to be kind to others even if they reject advice. One should instead hope for reward by fulfilling their duty from Allah, the Exalted, by giving good and sincere advice to another.

In addition, the one seeking advice should not ask for advice if they have already made their mind up before hand as this only opens the door for a potential argument if they seek someone's advice only to reject it as it contradicts their pre-determined choice.

Single Heart

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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. 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.”

Being on Guard

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to understand that no matter how much religious knowledge one obtains or how much worship and righteous deeds they perform they will never be safe from the attacks and traps of the Devil. This is because the Devil attacks each person according to how much knowledge they possess and how much righteous deeds they perform. For example, he will try to convince the muslim who is strict in offering their obligatory prayers not to offer them in congregation at the Mosque or by convincing them to delay their obligatory prayers beyond their starting times as he knows he will not be able to convince them to completely abandon the obligatory prayers. Whereas, in respect to the muslim who is struggling to establish their obligatory prayers he will attempt to convince them that they are too difficult to establish therefore they should only offer them when they are completely free. He tries to convince those who perform many voluntary righteous deeds not to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to improve their character so that they continue to destroy their good deeds through bad characteristics such as, lying and backing.

The Devil aims to prevent a person from a reaching a higher level if he cannot convince them to fall in rank through disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims should always be on guard against his attacks and traps by persistently striving to increase in rank, improve their character and avoid acts of disobedience which is all achieved by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Easy or Difficulty Journey

I had a thought which I wanted to share. If a person had to cross a country and was presented different paths to choose from such as, a path through a dangerous jungle or over a mountain or through an underground cave an intelligent person would certainly choose the simplest and easiest path. This would allow them to reach their destination safely while achieving peace of mind and body. Only a fool would choose a difficult and dangerous path thereby, unnecessarily burdening themselves.

In reality, each person is on a journey through this world and their destination is the hereafter. Therefore, an intelligent muslim should choose the path through this world which is easy and straight forward in order to reach the hereafter safely. This path 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, and only taking from this material world in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This would allow them to reach the hereafter safely while obtaining peace of mind and body. But the more one indulges in the excess of this material world and unnecessarily devotes themselves to people and their desires the more difficult their journey will become. This attitude will only deprive them of peace of mind and body and reduce the chances of them reaching the hereafter safely.

To conclude, muslims must understand that life is a journey so they should therefore be kind to themselves and choose the simple and easy path in order to reach the hereafter safely thereby obtaining peace of mind and body in both worlds.

Eliminate Jealousy

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is obvious that envy has affected many muslims. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned this would occur in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510. It leads to many other negative characteristics and problems. For example, it prevents muslims from fulfilling the important duty of supporting good irrespective of who does it as the jealous person does not desire to aid others as they believe the other person's rank in society will increase beyond their own.

A muslim must take steps to remove jealousy from their character. One thing which can aid in this goal is to become content with what a person possesses. Allah, the Exalted, does not give people according to their desires as this might lead to their destruction. He instead gives what is best for each person's faith. Understanding this can eliminate jealousy over what others possess. How many muslims obtained wealth which destroyed their faith? And how many muslims will be forgiven on Judgment Day because of the tests they endured patiently? 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 other thing to understand it that as this material world is limited it is easy to become jealous over the things within it. But if a muslim aims for the hereafter and prioritises it over the excess of this material world it would remove jealousy from them. This is because the blessings of the hereafter are unlimited therefore, there is no need to be jealous as there are plenty of blessings to go around in fact, they will never end. But the more one aims and desires the limited things found within the world the more jealous they will become.

Make Things Useful

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Reliance on Allah, the Exalted

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is strange how some muslims have adopted an attitude whereby they use reliance on Allah, the Exalted, as an excuse to be lazy on those matters which contradict their desires. For example, when these muslims are told to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they correctly obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, they boldly reply that Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful and All Forgiving so they hope He will forgive them even if they do not strive in His obedience. Even though Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful and All Forgiving He has set a system in this universe which requires one to act if they desire to achieve success.

In addition, if they are so certain on the divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness why do they fail to show the same level of reliance on His divine attribute of being the Provider? Meaning, the One who has allocated the provision to the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Why do they not relax at home without claiming benefits or earning through a job in order to obtain their provision and simply rely on Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them the same way they rely on His forgiveness without striving for it? This cherry picking attitude proves their laziness and real incorrect intention. They do not rely on Allah, the Exalted, at all. This attitude must change before one's time comes so that they instead actively obey Allah, the Exalted, and rely internally on His forgiveness and mercy. Only then will a muslim achieve true success in both worlds.

Superiority and Success

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Use Your Means

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Times of Ease

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.”

Your Job

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Useful Time

I had a thought which I wanted to share. There are many muslims who dedicate much of their time, effort and wealth on things which are neither righteous deeds nor sins meaning, they are vain things. Vain things can also include acquiring unnecessary things, such as beautifying one's home beyond their necessities. Even though, they might be correct in their claim that they are not committing sins it is important to understand a fact. Namely, time is a precious gift from Allah, the Exalted, which cannot be gained once it departs. All other things can be acquired, such as wealth, all other things except time. So when one dedicates their time as well as other blessings such as wealth to unnecessary and extra things meaning, vain things, it will only lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. This will occur when they observe the reward given to those who made use of their time and performed righteous deeds. Time wasters may have avoided sins which save them from punishment but as they wasted time on vain things they may face criticism. And they will surely lose out on the reward they could have gained if they utilised their time and other blessings correctly.

In addition, it is important to understand that the more one indulges in vain things the closer they are to falling into extravagance and waste both of which are blame worthy. For example, those who waste blessings are considered the siblings of the Devil. And it can be argued when one dedicates their time to vain things they have in fact wasted the precious blessing of time. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”

Make Things Easy

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the behaviour of some who 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 the 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.

Advise Others Differently

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about the important duty on all muslims to command good and forbid evil. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah...”

Even though, this 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.”

Step Back and Assess

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the following verse of the Holy Quran: 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.

Paranoia

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common problem found amongst muslims. When some face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to assess whether they need to change for the better and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief they instead turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual means. These people only cause a muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. These people convince muslims that their problems have either been caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns, or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This incorrect advice causes muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. This attitude will also damage one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, as they will be advised in many cases to do things which are not advised in the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will fully rely on Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. Strong faith allows a muslim to understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the entire creation cannot benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, wills it. And every case and situation only occurs according to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

To conclude, a muslim when encountering a problem should firstly assess their own behaviour and rectify it if necessary and then remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and avoid further problems in the form of paranoia by avoiding people who claim to fix worldly problems in spiritual ways.

Helping Others

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Since the passing of the righteous predecessors the strength of the muslim nation has weakened dramatically. It is logical that the greater the number of people in a group the stronger the group will become yet muslims have somehow defied this logic. The strength of the muslim nation has only decreased as the number of muslims have increased. One of the main reasons this has occurred is connected to chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2 of the Holy Quran:

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

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

The other thing connected to this is that many muslims fail to support each other in good as they believe the person they are supporting will gain more prominence than them. This condition has even affected scholars and Islamic educational institutes. They make lame excuses not to aid others in good as they do not have a relationship with them and they fear their own institution will be forgotten and those they help will gain further respect in society. But

this is completely wrong as one only needs to turn the pages of history to observe the truth. As long as one's intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, supporting others in good will increase their respect within society. Allah, the Exalted, will cause the hearts of the people to turn to them even if their support is for another organisation, institution or person. For example, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed this world Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily challenged for the Caliphate and would have found plenty of support in his favour. But he knew the right thing to do was to nominate Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not worry about being forgotten by society if he supported another person. He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

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

Company of the Greats

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the fact that 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.

Supporting People

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the things which prevent a person from changing for the better. Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion's life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct

none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Pleasing Everyone

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a common problem most people encounter during their lives. 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.

Things Change with Time

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a thing which people generally complain about, especially parents. During a person's youth due to a lack of responsibilities and sharing a common daily schedule, such as attending the same school, people form strong and close bonds with others, such as siblings or friends. But with the passing of time as the responsibilities of people increase and differ and due to changes in their daily schedule people adopt different characteristics. This causes the bonds between them to weaken and in some cases they become quite distant from one another.

This is often observed in homes which have many siblings or amongst friends. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, created each person with their own unique path in life, which is different from others. This is a sign of His infinite power. Billions of people yet, no two paths are the same. The differences in these paths are the main cause why people drift apart from each other. Best friends become friends only by name. Close siblings become emotionally distant from one another. This is a part of destiny and is truly inevitable. It is important to understand this point as some people can become ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted, because of it. They dislike the changes in their lives which lead to the changes in their relationships with others. But these changes in their lives are something Allah, the Exalted, chose so disliking them is disliking the choice of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should instead see things in a positive way. Meaning, they should have hope that one day in the hereafter the strong fellowship they once shared with someone will once again be forged but to a much higher and unbreakable level. This hope should inspire a muslim to be more obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience knowing that this outcome will only be granted to His obedient servants. In addition, it will cause a muslim to desire and supplicate for their companion to also strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. They will

also be rewarded for acting 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. So adopting this mentality will help a muslim to avoid ingratitude, strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and gain more reward all the while hoping they will once again be blessed with a strong bond they once shared with their companion. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 47:

“And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other.”

Being Honest when Advising Others

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a strange attitude many people have adopted. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something

they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

The Material World and the Hereafter

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the material world and the amount of effort most people dedicate to it compared to the effort dedicated to one's religion. If one observes the material world, such as the movie industry, they will find that the people involved dedicate a large amount of effort in order to achieve success. For example, not only do people spend countless hours and millions of pounds making a film but after its completion they dedicate more effort and money publicising it. Celebrities travel around the world for the sake of a meeting or interview which lasts less than hour just to promote their work.

Unfortunately, it is quite obvious that most muslims do not even dedicate a fraction of this effort in their religious affairs, such as strengthening their own faith or spreading the word of Islam. Social media is full of worldly things which people have dedicated much time and money to which is obvious to anyone who observes it. Whereas, the money and effort dedicated to Islamic education on social media is only a fraction of this. Islam does not teach muslims to completely abandon the world as it is required in order to gather one's lawful provision. But if a muslim honestly assesses their own life and daily activities it will be obvious to them that the majority of their effort, wealth and time is dedicated to the material world. It is very rare to observe someone who dedicates the majority of their time to Islam and preparing for the hereafter. If people can dedicate so much effort and money on worldly things, such as making movies, even though these are temporal things muslims should work even harder for the eternal hereafter. These worldly people dedicate much effort to their worldly projects and therefore obtain success. If muslims desire real success in this world and in the next they too must dedicate time and energy in preparing for the hereafter. It is simply foolish to believe that a muslim can obtain the blessings of this world and the next by either exerting minimal effort or no effort at all in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. If worldly success cannot be

achieved without effort how can a muslim believe they will obtain religious success without effort? Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

United Family

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a problem which affects most muslim families. With the passing of time they 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...”

Effects of Intention

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over 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. This outcome occurs as a result 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.

Not a Controller

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

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

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

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

Worldly Knowledge

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

How to Win

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Eternal Rest

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to understand that even though people strive in this material world in order to achieve peace of mind it is not possible to achieve in this world as it has not been placed in the material world. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

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

Even though this fact eludes many it is quite obvious that the more one strives in this material world the more doors they open to the material world. Fulfilling one worldly task leads to ten others. So a person moves from one preoccupation to another with the no end in sight until they depart this world. The only way to obtain some peace in this world is through the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This muslim will be granted peace of mind by Allah, the Exalted. But even then it is important to understand that true lasting peace of mind is only found in the hereafter. This is because no matter how good someone's life is even if they reach a point where they have no worldly or religious responsibilities as they have discharged them all and they have no other things to deal with even then, the reality of death, the grave and Judgment Day will prevent them from obtaining true lasting peace. Therefore, a muslim should understand this reality as it helps one to remain patient when dealing with life and what it brings and it encourages a muslim to strive in preparation for the hereafter so that they can achieve true lasting peace by obtaining the gardens of refuge and an eternal resting place.

Agree to Disagree

I had a thought which I wanted to share. As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between lawful worldly options a muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

Giving Advice

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for muslims to offer advice correctly and sincerely as this is an aspect of Islam according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. In lawful matters an aspect of this is that a muslim should give advice based on the character of the one seeking the advice instead of basing it on their own character. This is in fact a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who gave different advice when questioned about the same thing from different people. This is important as people are different and what one person finds bearable another might not so it is best to give advice based on the questioner's character. This attitude will reduce the chances of one giving a biased opinion which is tailored to their own character and way of life.

In addition, in lawful matters in most cases it is best not to directly advise people what to do instead they should be advised and aided in putting together a list of pros and cons to each possible choice and then make an informed decision based on this list. This will most likely lead to a better and satisfactory outcome and it prevents a person blaming their advisor in the future as they did not advise them directly by telling them to choose a specific option.

Finally, a person should never be ashamed of admitting they are unsure about a matter and should advise others to seek advice from someone more qualified if necessary.

Avoiding Bitterness

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

True Mercy

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

In Your Hands

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Islam teaches muslims that every blessing they possess, such as wealth or children, should be contained in their hand not their heart. An excellent way of achieving this is that each blessing should be used according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, not one's own desire. For example, one should strive to only spend their wealth on things commanded and recommended by Islam, such as a person's own necessities and on the necessities of their dependents while avoiding waste, extravagance and excessiveness. This attitude will prevent one from becoming attached to the blessing meaning, it will ensure the blessing remains in their hands instead of their heart. This is an important concept to understand and act on as it prevents one from becoming too attached to the blessing. As each worldly blessing is bound to pass away this attitude will prevent one from becoming overly sad meaning, becoming grieved and depressed when it eventually does. Keeping the blessing in one's hand might lead to sadness when one eventually lose it but this sadness is acceptable in Islam and does not lead to impatience and mental disorders, such as depression, which severe sadness namely, grief, leads to.

In addition, this attitude prevents one from misusing the blessing which often occurs when it is within one's heart instead of their hands. For example, unnecessarily hoarding wealth and greedily amassing more. This concept 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...”

Keeping things in one's hand instead of their heart will ensure they always remember that the blessing belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and not them. This again prevents impatience when one eventually loses it. This has been indicated in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

So a muslim must strive to use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam thereby, ensuring it remains in their hands instead of their heart which in fact should contain only the love of Allah, the Exalted.

Dependency

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is quite common for people to become dependent on others, such as their family. Even though, having hope in people is not a sin but as they are imperfect a muslim always runs the risk of being let down, in fact it is inevitable. They should instead strive to rely on Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through his obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as a muslim who is disobedient will not depend on Allah, the Exalted. They should then fulfil their duties in respect of the creation without expecting or hoping in anything in return from them. This will aid in eliminating their dependency on them. Allah, the Exalted, has made it crystal clear that whoever correctly depends on Him through His sincere obedience will be sufficed from all issues they might face in both worlds. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

As Allah, the Exalted, is firm on His promises when one depends on Him they too will become steadfast and firm when facing difficulties. But if they rely on people who are prone to change with the passing of time they will become fickle and fail to remain steadfast.

The stronger one's helper and refuge the stronger they will become. If a muslim seeks refuge with Allah, the Exalted, who has power over all things, through sincere obedience, they will become empowered to overcome all difficulties. But if they seek refuge and depend on people, who by their nature are weak, they too will become weak in the face of difficulties. This is like a person who seeks refuge in a strong fortified castle during a storm and another who seeks refuge in a straw hut. It does not take a genius to determine who is more likely to overcome the difficulty of the storm successfully.

Life is Like a Holiday

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Building Trust in Allah, the Exalted

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

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

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

Special Days

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is commonly observed that in the special days and nights of the Islamic year, such as the night of power, which is considered to be on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Ramadan according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1386, muslims come out in droves and inhabit the Mosques or pray more at home. Even though, this is a good thing it is important to understand that a muslim should not only behave in this manner on the special days and nights of the Islamic year. They should instead respect each day and night throughout the whole year by fulfilling their duties in them without neglect. They should never believe the worship of one day or night in the year will make up for their neglect of the rest of year as this is completely untrue and a trick of the Devil. Being a muslim is a 24/7 duty it is not a duty which extends only on certain days and nights. Meaning, a muslim must fulfil their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions, face destiny with patience and fulfil the rights of people every day of their life according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Cherry picking certain days and nights is a major reason why muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, as they only turn to Him occasionally. The truth is simple, what muslims dedicate to Allah, the Exalted, is what they will receive in return. If they only dedicate a few days or nights in the year to Him then they should not expect a great return. Islam does not demand one to pray all night instead it demands muslims to fulfil their obligatory duties and as much of the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as possible. This does not take much time up and leaves one with plenty of time to do other things as well.

In reality, the one who does not respect every day and night by fulfilling their duties in them will find that even the special days and nights are just ordinary days and nights for them. But the one who respects every day and night will find that every day and night is like the special days and nights, like the night

of power, for them. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, will bless them just like He blesses them on the special days and nights in the Islamic year.

Teaching and Learning

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Even though the amount of Islamic scholars, lecturers and Islamic educational material has increased over time yet, the strength of muslims has only decreased. There are many factors for this. One of the main reasons is that many scholars have not adopted the correct intention when teaching others. Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by teaching only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they taught for other reasons such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, they often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side they instead desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their speeches and therefore they have little positive influence over their listeners.

Another factor is that the intention of the listeners is not correct. They attend lectures not for sake of Allah, the Exalted, and changing for the better instead many only attend lectures searching for a spiritual high just like a music concert. They seek entertainment not reformation. They please themselves by claiming they are working hard in order to act on Islamic teachings by attending many events and gatherings yet, because of their attitude they do not change for the better by acting on the lessons they have heard. They believe merely listening is good enough to please Allah, the Exalted, and to succeed. It is why some attend lectures for decades yet do not change at all for the better.

Finally, many of the scholars failed to act on what they preach. For example, they teach others to unite yet they are disconnected from other scholars and fail to aid other scholars and institutions in good as they fear they will be forgotten if they do so. They advise others to turn away from the material world yet, they are the most engrossed in it. Even though, they claim to be detached in their hearts, which in most cases is not true, they still have deviated from the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, who was the most detached from this world both outwardly and inwardly. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their teachings to become ineffective.

When Others Depart

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

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