

THE BLESSED GROUPS

PodSeries - Vol 15



Achieve Noble Character

The Blessed Groups

PodSeries, Volume 15

ShaykhPod Books

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THE BLESSED GROUPS

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Compiler's Notes](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The Muslims and Believers](#)

[The Obedient](#)

[The Truthful](#)

[The Patient](#)

[The Humble](#)

[The Charitable](#)

[The Fasting](#)

[The Chaste](#)

[The People of Remembrance](#)

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

[A Great Reward from Allah, the Exalted](#)

[Equality](#)

[A Special Request](#)

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

[Also By ShaykhPod Books](#)

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

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

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

In this book the different groups of people mentioned in a single verse of the Holy Quran who will be blessed with a great reward and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds will be discussed. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35:

“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

Muslims must strive to at least adopt the characteristics of one of these groups so that they can Achieve Noble Character.

The Muslims and Believers

“Indeed, the muslim men and muslim women, the believing men and believing women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

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

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

A true believer, according to the Hadith quoted earlier, is when one keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever

illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree will go to Hell.

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly.

Unfortunately, this duty is often neglected even though treating one's neighbours kindly is an important aspect of Islam. First of all, it is important to note that a person's neighbour in Islam includes all those people who are living within forty houses in each direction to a muslim's home. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 109.

A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbour. In fact, a muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. A muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour's property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person such as, financial or emotional support.

A muslim should always conceal the faults of their neighbours. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publically disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1964, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a believer and an evil person.

A true believer can be considered naive in respect to people as they always interpret their words and actions in a positive way instead of always thinking bad about others. They do not judge others and instead treat people how they desire others to treat them. Loving for others what one loves for themselves is in fact the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They prove this through their actions by supporting others according to their means such as, financial and emotional support.

This Hadith describes a believer as noble as they act with good character in both public and in private. Meaning, they show good character in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by having a sincere intention and practically fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They also fulfil the other aspect of faith which is to

show good character to people by treating them according to the teachings of Islam, which includes fulfilling the rights of others such as their dependents.

On the other hand an evil person behaves opposite to these characteristics. Specifically, they are deceitful and treacherous in respect to the rights they owe Allah, the Exalted, and people. They demand their rights in full but fail to fulfil the rights of others. They strive to fulfil their desires by any means necessary including unlawful means and do not care who they wrong in the process.

It is important for muslims not to only rely on their declaration of faith but also strive to adopt the noble characteristics of true belief.

Unfortunately, some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their heart and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's spiritual heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's spiritual heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure spiritual heart.

In addition, demonstrating one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, practically is their proof and evidence which is required on Judgment Day in order to be granted Paradise. Not having this practical evidence is as silly as a student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming their knowledge is in their mind so they therefore do not need to write it down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would undoubtedly fail so will a person who reaches Judgment Day without the obedience of

Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, even if they possess faith in their heart.

The Obedient

“...the obedient men and obedient women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

The following verse commands the believers to show sincere obedience. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you...”

Obeying Allah, the Exalted, is only achieved by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge as obeying someone without knowing their commands is simply not possible. It involves sincerely fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Obeying Allah, the Exalted, includes choosing His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, instead of loving and hating according to their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, includes learning and acting on his traditions. In reality, the one who obeys

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in this manner has obeyed Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

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

It is important to note, that this obedience involves not cherry picking which commands to follow and which ones to ignore according to one's own desires nor should a muslim rearrange the priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in respect to His commands and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the one who refuses to obey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby failing to obey Allah, the Exalted, has been warned of Hell in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7280. Obedience to him includes accepting his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

“...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from...”

One must give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing whether they are from his family or his Companions, may Allah be

pleased with them all. Supporting those who tread on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to obey him. It includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that one cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. As explained already this love must be shown through actions not just words.

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59, also highlights the importance of obeying those who are in political power as long as they do not contradict the teachings of Islam. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. In cases like this revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people and instead they should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path for if they remain straight the general public will remain straight also.

This obedience includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary such as, financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, Book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and advising against anything which causes a disruption within society.

Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59, also indicates the importance of obeying and following the advice of those who have been given authority in religious

matters namely, the rightly guided scholars. The foremost of this group are the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, followed by the righteous predecessors. A muslim should not follow their own desires but follow in the footsteps of these pious people as they are walking in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The Truthful

“...the truthful men and truthful women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive such as, fame. This is in fact the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317. It advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them.

The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suits one's desires. They must adhere to the hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

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

The Patient

“...the patient men and patient women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

In reality, patience is needed in all aspects of one's life as one cannot fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, correctly, while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes, without patience. A muslim cannot refrain from the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, without patience and they cannot face destiny without it.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. 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.”

In addition, it is important for muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”

The Humble

“...the humble men and humble women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that when one lives with humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they will be raised in rank. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servant hood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility namely, pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is true servant hood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

In order to truly understand humility one must understand its opposite namely, pride. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom's worth of pride in their heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs is only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

The Charitable

“...the charitable men and charitable women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that when a muslim donates a tiny amount of charity, such as a single date fruit, from lawful earnings Allah, the Exalted, will give reward on Judgment Day equivalent to a large mountain.

The first thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, is only pleased with wealth which is obtained lawfully and utilized in a lawful manner. Any wealth which is obtained unlawfully will corrupt any righteous deed it is used upon such as charity or performing the Holy Pilgrimage with it. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, clearly warns that a person's supplication will be rejected if they obtain and utilize the unlawful. If one's supplication is rejected how can any other action be accepted by Allah, the Exalted?

Finally, this Hadith indicates the importance of spending in anyway which pleases Allah, the Exalted, such as spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. Allah, the Exalted, will greatly reward those who spend in the correct way according to their intention meaning, the quality of their spending and not according to quantity. Therefore, muslims should correct their intention by spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of how much or little it is. It is important for a muslim to spend according to their means and never worry about how much or little they spend. It is hoped that whoever spends according to their means will be granted reward according to the infinite status of Allah, the

Exalted, which is beyond comprehension. But the one who holds back will miss out on this great reward.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the rich in this world will be poor in the hereafter unless they spend their wealth correctly but these people are a few in number.

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day as they will be held accountable and even punished over it.

In addition, those who fail to spend their wealth correctly will find that their wealth abandons them at their grave and so they will reach the hereafter empty handed meaning, as a pauper. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. The deceased will leave the wealth behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for obtaining it.

Finally, as the wealthy are distracted by gaining, hoarding, safeguarding and increasing their wealth it distracts them from performing righteous deeds which is the thing that will make someone rich on Judgment Day. In reality, losing out on this will make them poor.

It is important to note, spending wealth correctly is not only donating charity but includes one's spending on their own necessities and the necessities of their dependents without being wasteful or extravagant.

The truly rich person is the one who uses their wealth correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. And this attitude is not dependent of having much wealth. Any amount of wealth used correctly will cause one to become rich even if they possess little wealth. In reality, this person takes their wealth with them to the hereafter and this attitude provides them free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds which only increases their richness in the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2336, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every day two Angels supplicate to Allah, the Exalted. The first asks Allah, the Exalted, to compensate the one who spends for His sake. The second asks Allah, the Exalted, to destroy the one who withholds.

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but it also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of one's family as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

“...But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it...”

A muslim should remember a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to Paradise, close to people and far from Hell. Whereas, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Finally, it is important to note, that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and expend their blessings in the correct way as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication against their blessing by the Angel maybe accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 603, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everyone will stand under the shade of their charity on Judgment Day.

It is important to bear in mind this is an extremely vital blessing to obtain as on Judgment Day the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. People struggle to handle the heat of a summer's day how will they possibly handle the heat of Judgment Day without shade?

A muslim should therefore strive to give regular charity irrespective of its quantity as Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity He judges actions

based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465, advises that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the regular ones even if they are small. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that He will reward actions even if they are the size of an atom. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it”

Therefore, this leaves muslims with no excuse not to regularly donate charity for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, hoping to gain a strong shade which protects them from the severe heat of a Great Day.

As briefly mentioned earlier, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, advises that charity does not decrease one's wealth.

This is because whatever a muslim spends for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to any blessing, such as time, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate them. This compensation will be much more than what they originally used. 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?...”

For example, Allah, the Exalted, may grant the one who spends for His sake with financial opportunities which leads to an overall increase in wealth. In addition, this could be referring to the reality that whatever is destined to be

spent on a person, which is their true wealth, can never change irrespective of their behaviour or the behaviour of the entire creation. In fact, a person's provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. So in reality, one's charity will not change the amount of wealth which is destined to be spent on them, such as wealth spent on their food.

The Fasting

“...the fasting men and fasting women...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As briefly indicated earlier there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damages one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235.

Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on.

The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting.

Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

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

The Chaste

“...the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6474, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, guaranteed Paradise to the person who safeguards their mouth and chastity.

The first thing mentioned indicates safeguarding one's speech. Meaning, a muslim must avoid all types of evil speech such as backbiting as it only takes a single evil word to cause someone to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

In addition, a muslim should avoid all vain and useless speech as this only wastes one's precious time which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. In addition, vain speech is often the first step before sinful speech therefore, it is best to avoid it. One should either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

The main Hadith under discussion also advises to safeguard oneself from consuming the unlawful. This will lead to all of one's righteous deeds being rejected irrespective of their intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

The second aspect of the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to safeguard their chastity meaning, avoid unlawful relationships. A muslim has been given a way to achieving this namely, marriage. If a muslim is not in the

right position to get married, such as financially, then they should fast often as this reduces carnal desires. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1905.

Finally, as these two aspects combined lead to Paradise it is therefore the reason why getting married has been labelled completing half of one's faith in a Hadith found in Al Mujum Al Awsat, number 992.

The People of Remembrance

“...and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward..”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the difference between the person who remembers Allah, the Exalted, and the one who does not is like a living person compared to a dead person.

It is important for muslims who desire to create a strong connection with Allah, the Exalted, so that they can overcome all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter successfully to remember Allah, the Exalted, as much as possible. Put simply, the more they remember Him the more they will achieve this vital goal.

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted.

The second level is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue by only speaking good words and avoiding sinful and vain words.

And the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and

act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

Those who remain on the first two levels will receive reward depending on their intention but they are unlikely to increase the strength of their faith and piety unless they move to the third and highest level of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.

The Forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted

The next part of chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35 of the Holy Quran mentions the blessings Allah, the Exalted, grants the blessed groups listed in this verse which have been discussed in the previous chapters.

“...for them Allah has prepared forgiveness...”

Allah, the Exalted, conceals and covers the faults of His repentant servants without punishing them or holding it against them in anyway.

A muslim should therefore never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to unbelief. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

“...and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.”

A muslim should understand that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited while their sins will always be limited. The limited can never overcome the unlimited. But it is important to note this applies to the one who repents sincerely not the one who continues sinning believing they will be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking not true hope in the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and if necessary from people, sincerely promising to refrain from the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should act on this blessed divine attribute by overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others. It is logical to understand that if one desires the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, they should learn to forgive others. 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.”

A Great Reward from Allah, the Exalted

The next part of chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35 of the Holy Quran mentions the blessings Allah, the Exalted, grants the blessed groups listed in this verse which have been discussed in the previous chapters.

“...for them Allah has prepared...a great reward.”

This is connected to a great event discussed in chapter 27 An Naml, verse 36:

“So when they came to Solomon, he said, "Do you provide me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Rather, it is you who rejoice in your gift.”

This is when a queen who was invited to accept faith by the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, sent him worldly gifts in order to test his character. Muslims should understand the importance of not compromising on their faith for the sake of worldly blessings. Whatever they gain from doing so will eventually become a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. Instead, they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, by remaining firm on their faith and values. If they do this they will be granted the same eternal success the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, was granted.

In addition, a muslim should understand that striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the blessings associated with it will always be greater than any worldly blessing. In fact, this is what the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, was referring to when he rejected the queen's

gifts. Religious blessings are always flawless and lasting whereas worldly blessings will always have some sort of difficulty attached to it and they are temporary in nature. When one strives in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience Allah, the Exalted, grants them something which the entire mankind irrespective of their faith strives night and day for namely, contentment and peace of mind. This is the ultimate goal of all people even if they have smaller aims and goals, such as travelling the world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2373, that true richness does not lie with wealth but being content with life. It is why rich worldly people do not find true peace of mind and why a poorer muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, does. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.”

There is nothing wrong with seeking lawful wealth while avoiding excessiveness but muslims should understand that Allah, the Exalted, did not place peace of mind in it.

Equality

Finally, it is important for muslims to understand a lesson from the verse which has been discussed so far in this book: chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 35:

“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”

This important lesson is connected to chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13 of the Holy Quran:

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

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

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

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