

Learning from History

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Achieve Noble Character

Learning from History

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses the importance of Learning from History in order to avoid the mistakes of the past. This discussion is based on Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, Verses 21-26 of the Holy Quran:

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him - [saying], "Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day." They said, "Have you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] come to delude us away from our gods? Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful." He said, "Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allah, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly." And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people. And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you, and We made for them hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]. But their hearing and vision and hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allah; and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim 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 Judgment Day will

be Noble Character. It is one of qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

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

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

Learning from History

Chapter 46 - Al Ahqaf, Verses 21-26

❁ وَأَذْكُرُ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ
النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۖ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنَتُفِكَأَ عَنْ ءَاهِتِنَا فَأِنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَئِنِّي
أَرِنَكُمْ قَوْمًا بَٰجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُّسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا
بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَىٰ إِلَّا مَسَكِنُهُمْ
كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَلَقَدْ مَكَنَّا لَهُمْ فِي مَا إِن مَّكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا
وَأَبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ
وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

"And mention the brother of 'Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him - [saying], "Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day."

They said, "Have you [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him] come to delude us away from our gods? Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful."

He said, "Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allah, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly."

And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment.

Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people.

And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you, and We made for them hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]. But their hearing and vision and hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allah; and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...”

Meaning, they knew him very well and testified to his unparalleled good character and truthfulness. This was true for all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, especially the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

During his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that were widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from immorality and other evil characteristics. Because of this he became known among the people of Mecca as Al Amin, the trustworthy. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 1, Page 180.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent his entire life amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca was enough of a proof of his declaration of Prophethood. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, invited the non-Muslims of Mecca to embrace Islam he used his 40 years amongst them as proof that he was speaking the truth. This evidence was undeniable even by the non-Muslims. This incident is recorded in a Hadith found in *Sahih Bukhari*,

number 4553. Only the arrogance of some prevented them from submitting to the truth. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

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

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him...”

This verse indicates the importance of implementing the teachings of Islam as reminders namely; glad tidings and warnings only benefit the person who acts on them. For example, those who ignore road hazard signs are often the ones who end up in dangerous situations. But those who act upon these hazards signs are protected from this danger. The glad tidings indicate the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon lead to the gardens of Paradise. And the warnings are the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, which acted upon protects one from divine punishment such as Hell.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf - and warners had already passed on before him and after him...”

The purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is for them to be sincerely obeyed and followed. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

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

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

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh...””

True worship involves sincerity. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted.

Sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, includes fulfilling all the duties given by Him in the form of commands and prohibitions, solely for His pleasure. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1, all will be judged by their intention. So if one is not sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing good deeds they will gain no reward in this world or in the next. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, those who performed insincere deeds will be told on Judgement Day to seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

“And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion.....”

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never

burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””

This indicates the great sincerity the Holy Prophet Hud, peace be upon him, possessed for others.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day."”

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or

regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely 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, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically

followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””

The Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation on the Day of Judgment. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864.

This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

One only needs to ponder over the times they were subjected to intense summer weather and how the heat affected their attitude and behaviour. Through this one can imagine how difficult the situation on Judgment Day will be when the Sun is brought so close to them. This shows that those who strive hard and exert sincere efforts in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find relaxation on Judgment Day. But those who were lazy and relaxed during their lives on Earth will be subjected to great stress on Judgment Day. Simply put, the one who strives here will relax there but the one who relaxes here will strive there in difficulty.

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching this retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life so that they can obtain peace and comfort on a day that is guaranteed to occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””

People will be commanded to cross the Bridge which will be placed over Hell on the Day of Judgment. This has been discussed extensively in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6573. It warns that extremely large hooks will be on the Bridge which will affect people according to their deeds. Some will be flung into Hell by them, some will be subjected to great torture before they cross the Bridge, others will only face minimal injury from them and finally the righteous will not be harmed by them. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 455, warns that the Bridge is narrower than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword.

The important thing to learn from this is that each person will cross the Bridge according to their deeds. So it is important for Muslims not to neglect any duties if they desire to cross the Bridge safely. They must fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. These include duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. One should not neglect this and simply hope they will magically cross the Bridge unaffected.

In addition, the ease at which a person will cross this Bridge will be a mirror of how much they remained steadfast on the straight path of Islam in this world. This straight path is 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...”

Anyone who abandons this path will not successfully cross this Bridge. Simply put, the more one remains steadfast on the straight path in this world the easier they will cross the Bridge over Hell on Judgment Day. The straight path has been made clear in this world so muslims are left with no excuses from following it thereby ensuring they safely cross the Bridge on Judgment Day.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.””

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh...They said, “Have you come to delude us away from our gods?...”...He said, “...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””

In reality, each idol worshipper only worships their own desires. The idols are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. This is one of the major reasons why every generation opposed the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, so viciously as they did not want to give up their desires.

So in this respect any desire which distracts one from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes an idol.

First of all, it is important to understand, that the major thing which separates a human from an animal is the fact that people live by a higher moral code. If people abandoned this and simply acted on their desires then there would be no difference between them and animals. In fact, people would be worse as they possess the higher level of thinking yet, still choose to live like animals.

Secondly, whether people want to admit it or not in reality, every person is a servant of something or someone. Some are servants of others, such as Hollywood executives and do whatever they command them to do even if it challenges modesty and shame. Others are servants of their relatives and friends and do whatever it takes to please them. Others are the worse by being servants of their own desires as this is the attitude of animals who generally act to please themselves. The best and highest form of servanthood is being a servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one turns the pages of history which clearly shows that those who were the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were granted the highest honour and respect in this world and will be granted this in the next. Centuries and millennia have passed yet their names are remembered as the pillars and beacons of history. Whereas those who became servants of others especially, their own desires were eventually disgraced in this world even if they achieved some worldly status and they became mere footnotes in history. The media barely remembers those who pass away for more than a few days before moving onto the next person to report on. During their lives these people eventually become sad, lonely, depressed and even suicidal as selling their souls and decency to their worldly masters did not grant them the contentment they were looking for. One does not need to be a scholar to understand this obvious truth. So if people must be servants they should be the servants of Allah, the Exalted, as lasting honour, greatness and true success lies only in this.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh...They said, “Have you come to delude us away from our gods?...”...He said, “...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””

Another root cause of this behaviour is blind imitation of others. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and

brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh...They said, “Have you come to delude us away from our gods?...”...He said, “...but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””

Another root cause of this behaviour is blind imitation of others. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims

who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.” He said, “Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allāh, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””

This is a foolish attitude as the declaration of faith or sincere repentance will not be accepted from a person once they observe their end. This is why the acceptance of belief will not benefit a person when they observe the Angel of Death or on Judgement Day as the unseen has now become seen to them. In addition, just because something has not occurred then and there does not mean it will not happen later on.

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

A muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show

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

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

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.” He said, “Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allāh, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly.””

These verses indicate that failing to sincerely obey and follow the knowledge given to the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, leads to divine punishment.

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

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on

the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one to the hereafter safely. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet, it possesses no engine. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], "Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day." They said, "...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful." ...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

It is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themselves and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should never forget to hold themselves accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

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.

“And mention the brother of ‘Aad [Prophet Hud, peace be upon him], when he warned his people in [the region of] al-Aḥqāf...[saying], “[saying], “Do not worship except Allāh. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day.” They said, “...Then bring us what you promise us, if you should be of the truthful.”...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain!” Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, within it a painful punishment. Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people...and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness.

This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them hearing...But their hearing...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

Even though, the number of preachers has increased over time and accessing information has become easier yet the strength of muslims has only weakened. One of the reasons is that many muslims have adopted a mentality which has hindered them from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge namely, they believe merely listening to Islamic knowledge is good enough to succeed. This is a trap of the Devil and completely contradicts the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors. They not only listened to religious knowledge but they fully intended and fulfilled this intention by acting on the knowledge they heard. Failing to act in this way has caused the faith of muslims to weaken. It is the reason why some muslims have spent decades attending religious gatherings and talks yet have not changed for the better at all. The danger of this attitude is that eventually people will fall lower by believing that they can simply declare Islam with their tongues without the need to listen or act on religious teachings. Muslims will be left with ignorance as their guide which will only lead them to destruction.

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them hearing...But their hearing...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

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

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

fail to correctly listen to it which involves understanding and acting on its teachings.

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

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for a muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown

to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group

greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...vision...But their...vision...availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

It is important for a muslim to understand a key truth namely, nothing in creation occurs without a wise reason even if people do not observe this wisdom immediately. A muslim should treat everything which occurs, whether they are in times of ease or difficulty, as a message in a bottle. They should not get too caught up in assessing and examining the bottle as it is merely a messenger which delivers the important message. This occurs when muslims either exult over the good things which occur thereby becoming heedless to the message within the good thing. Or they become grieved during difficulties thereby becoming too distracted to understand the message within the difficulty. They should instead concentrate on following the advice of the Holy Quran and approach each situation in a balanced way. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

This verse does not prohibit being happy or sad in different situations as this is a part of human nature. But it advises a balanced approach whereby one avoids extreme emotions namely, exultant which is excessive happiness or grief which is excessive sadness. This balanced approach will allow one to focus their mind on the more important message inside the bottle meaning, inside the situation whether it is a situation of ease or difficulty. Through assessing, understanding and acting on the hidden message a muslim can improve their worldly and religious life for the better. Sometimes the message will be a wakeup call to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, before their time runs out. Sometimes it will be a way of raising their rank. Other times a way of erasing their sins and sometimes a reminder not to attach themselves to the temporal material world and the things in it. Without this assessment one will merely journey through events without improving their worldly or religious life.

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

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

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

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill

the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

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

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

The corruption and hardness of the spiritual heart is an extremely important matter which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and, blessings be upon him, warned that when the spiritual heart becomes corrupt then the whole body becomes corrupt. This corruption is then reflected in one's speech and actions. Similarly, the Holy Quran has highlighted the importance of a soft and sound heart by advising that one will not derive benefit from their possessions or relatives on Judgment Day unless they possess a sound spiritual heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one with a hard spiritual heart can be described as a person who rejects the truth when it is presented to them believing they are superior in knowledge. They lack submission and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to abandoning good deeds, committing sins, excessive love and striving for the material world while remaining heedless to preparing for the eternal hereafter. The hard hearted are easily influenced by the Devil into committing sins and rejecting good deeds. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 53:

“[That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease and those hard of heart...”

Two specific blameworthy characteristics are adopted by the one who possesses a hard spiritual heart. They intentionally misinterpret divine scriptures in order to fulfil their own desires such as obtaining fame. They criticise those who strive to adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they desire people to follow their thinking and love for the material world. The second is that they cherry pick verses and Hadiths which suit their desires. They label those who strive to adopt and act on all verses and Hadiths as extremists thereby making their own attitude seem pleasing to others. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that those who talk excessively without mentioning Allah, the Exalted, are prone to adopting a spiritual hard heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart is furthest from Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2411.

As mentioned earlier those who abandon the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, will be cursed with a hard heart. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 13:

“So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who laughs excessively will become hard hearted. It is important to understand this does not mean one cannot smile as this has been classified as an act of charity by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. Laughing excessively causes one to adopt a mentality whereby they only discuss funny issues. This causes one to avoid serious issues such as death and Judgment Day. If one avoids these important issues how can

they prepare for them? A lack of preparation will lead to one's spiritual heart becoming hard.

Some say over eating can cause hardness of the spiritual heart. This is because over eating causes one to become lazy. Laziness leads to a reduction in good deeds which can cause the spiritual heart to become hard.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, when a person sins a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. If the number of sins increases then this blackness increases which leads to a hard spiritual heart. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”

This is why it has been said persistently sinning can cause the spiritual heart to die.

It is important for muslims to strive to soften their heart as it leads to its purification. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, when the spiritual heart is purified all the limbs of the body become purified also. This purification will encourage one to perform righteous deeds and abandon sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

“...And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys...Destroying everything by command of its Lord. And they became so that nothing was seen [of them] except their dwellings...And We had certainly established them in such as We have not established you and We made for them...hearts [intelligence]. But their...hearts availed them not from anything [of the punishment] when they were [continually] rejecting the signs of Allāh...”

One must avoid this outcome by using their senses correctly so that they adopt the correct understanding.

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.

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