

The Successful Groups

PodSeries - Vol 307



Achieve Noble Character

The Successful Group

ShaykhPod Books

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The Successful Group

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Acknowledgements

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

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

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some aspects of the Successful Group. This discussion is based on Chapter 58 Al Mujadila, Verse 22 of the Holy Quran:

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allah. Unquestionably, the party of Allah - they are the successful.”

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.

The Successful Group

Chapter 58 – Al Mujadila, Verse 22

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ
مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُؤْتِيكَ كِتَابَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيَدْخُلُهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ
اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ
اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allah. Unquestionably, the party of Allah - they are the successful.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah...”

True belief 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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day...”

The one who truly believes in Judgement Day will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Disbelief can be a literal rejecting of Islam or through actions, which involves disobeying Allah, the Exalted, even though one believes in Him. This can be clearly understood by an example. If an unaware person is warned by another of an approaching lion and the unaware person takes practical steps to obtain safety they will be considered someone who believed in the warning given to them as they adapted their behaviour based on the warning. Whereas, if the unaware person does not practically change their behaviour after being warned, people will suspect that they do not believe in the warning given to them even if the unaware person verbally claims belief in the warning given to them.

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and

incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others. This verse therefore warns against bad companionship.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear

sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

In addition, this verse does not mean a Muslim cannot befriend a non-Muslim as this particular verse refers to the non-Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Becoming intimately friendly to a non-Muslim who desired the destruction of Islam was especially dangerous at that time as the non-Muslims would spy on the Muslim community in order to gain vital intelligence which could aid them in their fight against Islam.

Generally speaking, the Holy Quran clearly advises that Allah, the Exalted, does not forbid befriending non-Muslims. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 8:

“Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous

toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.”

In reality, the main verse warns Muslims not to befriend those who direct them away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in reality can apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. As warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, a Muslim is on the religion of their friend. This means a person will adopt the characteristics, good or bad, which their companions possess.

In addition, treating all people kindly, Muslims and non-Muslims, is the characteristic of a true Muslim and true believer. A Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, advises that a true Muslim is the one who keeps other people, including non-Muslims, safe from their evil speech and actions. And a true believer does not harm people or their possessions through their speech or actions. So this verse warns Muslims to accompany the pious as they will direct them towards the mercy and obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between healthy social conduct with others and deep friendship with others. Deep friendship can lead one to compromising on their faith out of love for their companion whereas, good social conduct with others will never take one to this level. Therefore, Muslims must adopt good character and manners towards everyone but reserve deep friendship for those who will encourage them

towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This, only a Muslim can do for another Muslim. A non-Muslim on the other hand, will either directly or indirectly encourage a Muslim to disobey Allah, the Exalted, even if they do not intend this. This is because a non-Muslim lives by a separate code of conduct than a Muslim. And the behaviour which is acceptable to a non-Muslim may not be acceptable in the eyes of Islam.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

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

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

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many muslims now observe who is

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

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

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics which perfect a muslim’s faith.

The first is to love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes desiring what is best for others in both worldly and religious matters. This must be practically shown through one's actions meaning, supporting others financially, emotionally and physically within one's means. Counting one's favors to others not only cancels the reward but also proves their lack of love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as this person only loves gaining praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

Any type of negative feelings towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided.

To sum up, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions not just words. This is an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one's own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse reminds muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the

Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

All muslims have faith in Islam but the strength of their faith varies from person to person. For example, the one who follows the teachings of Islam because their family told them to is not the same as the one who believes in it through evidence. A person who has heard about something will not believe in it in the same way as the one who has witnessed the thing with their own eyes.

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is

important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

Allah, the Exalted, did not only declare a truth in the Holy Quran but He also provided evidence for it through examples. Not only examples which are to be found in the past nations but examples which have been placed in one's very own life. For example, in the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, advises that sometimes a person loves a thing even though it will cause them trouble if they obtained it. Similarly, they might hate a thing while there is much hidden good in it for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

There are many examples of this truth in history such as the Pact of Hudaiba. Some muslims believed this pact, which was made with the non-muslims of Mecca, would completely favour the latter group. Yet, history clearly shows that it favoured Islam and the muslims. This event is discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 2731 and 2732.

If one reflects on their own life they will find many examples when they believed something was good when it was actually bad for them and vice versa. These examples prove the authenticity of this verse and help one's faith strengthen.

Another example is found in chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

“It will be, on the Day they see it (Judgement Day) as though they had not remained [in the world] except for an afternoon or a morning thereof.”

If one turns the pages of history they will clearly observe how great empires came and went. But when they left they passed away in such a way as if they were only on Earth for a moment. All but a few of their signs have faded away as if they were never present on Earth in the first place. Similarly, when one reflects on their own life they will realise that no matter how old they are and no matter how slow certain days might have felt overall their life so far has passed in a flash. Understanding the truthfulness of this verse strengthens one's certainty of faith and this inspires them to prepare for the hereafter before their time runs out.

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any

difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person’s attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

This muslim reaches the level of excellence which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when a muslim performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they observe Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will guard their mind and body from sins. This is the one who when they speak they speak for Allah, the Exalted, when they are silent they are silent for Allah, the Exalted. When they act they act for Him and when they are still they are for His sake. This is an aspect of monotheism and understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through sincere obedience to Him in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the only path of success in both worlds.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...”

The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

The spirit could also be referring to divine revelation. This support is obtained when one fulfils the rights of the two types of divine revelation namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable

source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

"Say, [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.

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The word affection indicates a strong bond of love which influences a person's attitude and actions. It does not refer to showing respect and good manners to others.

This verse refers to certainty of faith which prevents one from being negatively influenced by others and instead encourages one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

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Often when muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a muslim’s attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their

phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

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An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine which their doctor prescribes fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human

and prone to errors. Yet, many muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Even though in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. 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.”

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him...”

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An aspect of achieving this level of faith is being pleased with the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to Allah, the Exalted, being pleased with them. One can achieve this by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. One reaches this level when they remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and difficulty.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to

each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

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Greatness and true success is not connected to worldly things, such as wealth or fame. A person may obtain some worldly success through these things but it is quite obvious if one turns the pages of history that this type of success is very temporary and it eventually becomes a burden and regret for a person. A muslim should never believe that superiority lies in these things thereby dedicating themselves to obtaining them while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Nor should they look down at others who do not possess these worldly things believing they have no value or significance as this attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6071, that the people of Paradise are those who are considered insignificant by society

and concluded that if they took an oath on something Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil it for them.

True honour, success and greatness in this world and the next only lies in piety. So the more one sincerely strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are even if they appear insignificant to society. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat verse 13:

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

A muslim should therefore search for true success in this and not waste their time and efforts in searching for it in worldly things otherwise they may well reach the hereafter a great loser. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, “Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.””

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

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

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely

give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

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

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

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

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him...those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

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In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever prioritises the hereafter over this material world will be granted contentment, their affairs will be corrected for them and they will receive their destined provision in an easy way.

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world

will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

In addition, this attitude will allow one to comfortably deal with any worldly issues which may arise during their life. This is because the less one interacts with the material world and focuses on the hereafter the less worldly issues they will face. The less worldly issues a person faces the more comfortable their life will become. For example, the one who possesses one house will have fewer issues to deal with in respect to it, such as a broken cooker, than the one who possesses ten houses. Finally, this person will easily and pleasantly obtain their lawful provision. Not only this but Allah, the Exalted, will place such grace in their provision that it will cover all their responsibilities and necessities meaning, it will satisfy them and their dependents.

But as mentioned in the other half of this Hadith the one who prioritises the material world over the hereafter meaning, by neglecting their duties or striving for the unnecessary and excess of this material world will find that their need, meaning greed, for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they have opened too many worldly doors. And they will receive their destined provision with difficulty and it will not give them satisfaction and never seem enough to fill their greed. This may even push them towards the unlawful which only leads to a loss in both worlds.

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

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

Whenever a person seeks peace of mind in the material world it will only lead them further away from their goal. Whenever a person sets a target in respect to this material world that target will only lead onto more targets. This continues until the person departs this world without obtaining what they were looking for. It is obvious that the rich do not obtain true peace of mind as they stress more than normal people and whatever they obtain of the world ends up becoming a burden for them. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465, that the one who focuses on the hereafter will be blessed with a rich heart and Allah, the Exalted, will organize their affairs meaning, they will obtain peace of mind. But the one who focuses on the material world will only see their poverty and their affairs will become scattered meaning, they will not achieve peace of mind. The one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will find peace of mind even if they possess little of this world. But the one who is lost in the material world will go from one worldly door to another but will never find true peace as it has not been placed there. If a person wants to watch a football game they should not go to a cricket match and if a muslim desires peace of mind they should not search for it in the material world as it lies only in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that those who adhere to the teachings of Islam will encounter difficulties throughout their lives as this is guaranteed but through their obedience Allah, the Exalted, will remove fear and grief from them so that they remain firm and steadfast on the correct path. This is similar to the one who only feels slight discomfort from a medical procedure as they have been anaesthetised.

“You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.”

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It is important to note, that one will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673. This is because every righteous deed is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of knowledge, inspiration, strength and opportunity to do the deed. This understanding prevents one from adopting pride which is vital to avoid as only an atom’s worth of pride is needed to take a person to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 267.

In addition, a muslim must understand that this mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of righteous deeds is in reality a light which one must gather in this world if they desire to obtain a guiding light in the hereafter. If a muslim lives in heedlessness and refrains from gathering this light in the world by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience then how can they expect to receive this guiding light in the hereafter?

All muslims desire to inhabit Paradise with the greatest servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But it is important to understand that simply wishing for this without action will not make it come true otherwise the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have done this. Simply put, the more one strives in learning and acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the closer they will be to him in the hereafter.

The greatest blessing of Paradise is physically observing Allah, the Exalted, which is discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7436. If a muslim desires to obtain this unimaginable blessing they must practically strive to achieve the level of excellence mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one performs actions, such as the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, overlooking them. This attitude ensures one's persistent and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. It is hoped that the one who strives for this level of faith will receive the blessing of physically observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

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