

# Captured

# News

on

# Noble Character

**PodNews – Complete Series**



**Achieve Noble Character**

**Captured News on Noble Character**

**ShaykhPod Books**

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Captured News on Noble Character

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## **Acknowledgements**

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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](mailto:ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com).

## Introduction

The following book briefly discusses some News reports and the lessons one can learn from them in order to Achieve Noble Character.

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

## **Captured News on Noble Character**

### **Positive Effect**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how a celebrity was standing up for women's rights. Undoubtedly, it is a good cause as honouring women has been taught by Islam even though some muslims fail to act on these teachings. The thing that came to mind is that many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives were granted success even if they were not muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases their bad intention is quite evident as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a woman's intelligence, good character and inner strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

## **Youth & Gangs**

I saw a news documentary a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the rise of drug trafficking and gangs especially amongst the muslim youth. In most cases, the first people that need to take responsibility and prevent this occurring are parents. Unfortunately, many parents point fingers and claim that school teachers, the police or the Imams of Mosques must keep the youth away from gangs and dealing drugs. Even though, they all have a duty but the primary and biggest duty lies with the parents.

Parents must educate their children continuously on the bad effects of gangs and illegal drugs. How it ruins the lives of the people involved and those who are connected to them, such as their families. It is just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2101. A bad friend is like a bad smell which infects their friends as well as others.

The key to keeping the youth away from gangs is education from parents primarily and then from others, such as siblings and teachers. Parents must question the whereabouts of their children in a gentle way. They must enquire about who they are going out with, where they are going and about their activities. They should even meet their children's friends to ensure they are suitable for companionship. If their children are in possession of expensive things which the parents did not purchase for them they must question this. If children are questioned like this from a young age they will

get familiar with it and not become upset when they are questioned later on in their lives. This is the duty of parents as indicated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Unfortunately, some parents believe their duty is only to earn wealth for their children. So they busy themselves with this and neglect the more important duty of rightly guiding and keeping an eye on their children. Yes, earning wealth is important but it cannot take priority over educating one's children on the difference between right and wrong.

This news documentary also discussed how some drug dealers fabricate or misinterpret the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to justify what they do. This is absurd as Islam clearly prohibits anything which causes harm to oneself and others, such as dealing illegal drugs. They even claim that selling illegal drugs to non-muslims is acceptable. But this completely challenges the teachings of Islam as a muslim must treat everyone with kindness and respect, irrespective of their faith. If a muslim does not have permission to disrespect the gods of other religions how can Islam encourage muslims to mistreat people from other faiths? Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 108:

*“And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge...”*

If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stressed the good treatment of animals in many Hadith, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, how can Islam give permission to mistreat humans?

Educating one's children will prevent them from being duped into believing and acting on evil statements and advice. This education begins at home; parents must step up and fulfil this duty. Only then does this duty extend to others, such as school teachers.

A parent will be exonerated on the Day of Judgement if they fulfil this duty irrespective of how their child chooses to behave. But if they fail this duty they will be held accountable in both this world and the next.

## **Life is a Moment**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the sudden death of a child celebrity. It is strange that even though people believe they can die at any moment yet the vast majority behave as if they will live a long life. Some dedicate their efforts to this material world to such a degree that even if they were guaranteed a long life they could not exert any more effort for the sake of the material world. Unfortunately, muslims delay preparing for the hereafter believing they can do it in the future. They often keep delaying this preparation until they suddenly encounter death unprepared.

It is important for muslims to understand that no matter how long they live life goes by in a flash. So they should take every opportunity they have in order to prepare for the eternal hereafter. This does not mean they should abandon the world completely. It means they should prioritize preparing for the hereafter by only taking what they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will allow them to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world and prepare adequately for the next one also. A muslim only fails preparing for the hereafter correctly because of their pursuit of the excess of this material world, not by striving to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities.

A muslim should remember the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7424, which warns that only a person's deeds will accompany them in their



grave while their family and wealth abandons them at this crucial moment. Therefore, a muslim should give priority to the thing which will aid them in their moment of need.

Muslims should not delay preparing for the hereafter otherwise they may well encounter death suddenly while unprepared as death does not come at a particular age or time. If they fail to prepare they will be left with nothing but regrets at a time when regrets will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

## **Compromising on Faith**

I read a news article a while back which I wanted to briefly discuss. The news article reported on a female senior member of the American government who was fired because she refused to implement an order which was clearly unethical and immoral. It is quite clear that senior posts in governments and large corporations are dominated by men. So one can imagine how hard she must have worked and how many sacrifices she must have made in order to reach her rank in the American government. She knew if she refused to follow her superior's orders she would have lost her job yet she still did not compromise on her values. Islam teaches muslims that they too should adopt this mentality and 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.

## **Grass is Greener on the Other Side**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a celebrity who discussed an abusive relationship she was once in. Firstly, there is no doubt Islam takes this behaviour very seriously and it is crystal clear that it contradicts its teachings. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never harmed a person unless it was in self-defence. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. So those who claim to follow him should behave in the same manner.

Moving on to the main point of this chapter which is that this news report reminds people of the famous yet incorrect concept and belief that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Meaning, the lives of others always seems to appear better than a person's own life. For example, normal people often observe celebrities and mistakenly believe their life is better. In the majority of cases this concept is far from the truth as people who appear to be in a better situation may well be facing difficulties which would make others wish not to trade places with them, such as the celebrity mentioned in this news article. An outsider will only observe things from one point of view. But if they could see the whole story they would realise everyone faces problems and no one has the perfect life, irrespective of what they own or how famous they are. Often this misconception is caused by the media. But people fail to remember that the aim of the media is to paint a certain picture of the lives of celebrities which looks appealing to read about. In most cases, if they only reported facts without sugar coating them the majority of their customers would turn away from them.

Muslims must avoid this false belief as it is a tool of the Devil who uses it to drive people towards ingratitude over what they possess. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513, that a muslim should always observe people who possess less worldly things than them instead of those who possess more. This attitude will prevent ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a muslim feels ungrateful they should shift their focus to the countless people who are living in severe poverty and facing much greater hardships than them. The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence; it is in fact green enough on one's own side. 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...”*

## **Doubtful Things**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different religious celebrations which occur throughout the year. It discussed whether it was acceptable for people from certain faiths to celebrate the religious days of other religions. There has been much debate and discussion whether this is lawful in Islam or not. This issue is connected to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2518. It advises that a muslim should leave a thing which creates doubt in them and act on the things which create no doubt in them. The vast majority of muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of the unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these things create no doubt within muslims therefore they should act accordingly meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from unlawful things.

All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed on Judgement Day. Instead, He will question why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. In fact, this is the advice given in another Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. It advises that both the lawful and unlawful things in Islam have been made clear to mankind and all other matters of voluntary

actions which create doubt should be left aside. This attitude will protect one's religion and honour.

Unfortunately, some muslims are so caught up in arguing about these non-obligatory actions that it prevents them from addressing important issues. This distraction is one of the reasons why the general strength of the muslim nation has declined over time.



## **Cure for Corruption**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the issue of widespread corruption and how it has infected every social level in most countries. Widespread corruption is quite evident and needs know deep investigation or research to prove its existence. In some cases it occurs out in the open. One of the reasons corruption spreads throughout society to the point that even top government officials are involved occurs after the general public becomes corrupt. When ordinary people mistreat others, through physical or financial means thereby disobeying Allah, the Exalted, believing no one can hold them accountable, then as a punishment Allah, the Exalted, appoints them corrupt leaders and government officials. Meaning, how one acts is how they are treated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when the general public cheat each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing them oppressive leaders. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will confiscate their wealth and property. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences.

When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing that this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads

to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by not mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption Muslims should truly reflect on their own behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude otherwise corruption in society will only increase with time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

## **Moving On**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on dealing with a severe calamity, such as the death of a loved one and the importance of moving on. It is important to understand that when a severe difficulty like the death of a loved one occurs it is better to return to one's normal daily routine and life as quick as possible instead of leaving everything in order to grieve. Even though, Islam does not prohibit mourning for those who have passed away yet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5339, that people should not mourn for more than three days with the exception of a wife for her deceased husband which is extended to four months and ten days. One of the wisdoms behind this is that when one drops everything in order to mourn it only gives them time to ponder over the difficulty excessively. This can cause one to become impatient and challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they dedicated so much time going over and over the calamity in their minds. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, warns that replaying the calamity over in one's mind thinking it could have been avoided only opens the door to the Devil which leads to impatience. Whereas, moving forward and returning to one's normal life after the recommended three days allows one to mourn but without falling into the difficulty too deeply. A normal routine distracts a person from their calamity and helps them to refocus on the bigger picture which prevents them from becoming impatient. Muslims should therefore busy themselves in performing righteous deeds which attracts the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, or they should busy themselves in lawful worldly activities like their job. And they should avoid dropping everything in order to mourn for days on end as this often leads them to a dark place which becomes difficult to escape without becoming impatient.

## **A True Patriot**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person who did not respect their national anthem which was labelled unpatriotic by some. In reality, a true patriot to Allah, the Exalted, and one's nation is not standing during a national anthem or saluting a flag. A true patriot is the one who supports others, such as their government, in things which are beneficial and praiseworthy in respect to Islam irrespective of who is organising or responsible for it. And who constructively criticises others, such as their government, when they do something blame worthy in the sight of Islam irrespective of who orchestrated it. This criticism must be constructive within the limits of the law while avoiding all forms of vain or vulgar speech and actions. It should never lead to rebellion as this only leads to the harm of innocent people which history has clearly shown time and time again.

It is important to note, that each muslim can behave in this manner even if they are not in a position of political or social influence. Each person can behave like a true patriot in respect to others, especially their relatives, by behaving in the manner outlined earlier meaning, supporting good and kindly forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

If each family unit behaved in such a manner it would undoubtedly affect each town, city and eventually the nation until a true improvement occurs which in turn benefits all irrespective of their faith. This desire and supporting it with sincere actions to improve a nation in this way is true patriotism. Everything else is only a meaningless show. This is how one makes a country truly great again.

## **Attracting Attention**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person who was expressing their extreme and controversial views on a particular subject.

It is important for muslims especially, in this day and age to understand the difference between those who discuss certain topics which may be considered controversial in order to genuinely benefit people through a positive change and those who simply discuss these issues in order to attract the attention of others. Those who desire a positive change in society will always show respect and good character towards others especially, to those they are challenging through their words. They never result to vulgar language or actions in order to declare their point of view. They instead study and understand the subject they are debating about without misinterpreting or falsifying information in order to support their point of view. Their criticism is always constructive and their genuine and sincere intention to improve the society is shown through their behaviour and words. These are the people who muslims should pay attention to as if they are correct it will improve society for everyone. But if their viewpoint is wrong they will accept the truth when it is made clear to them by others. But those who behave opposite to this correct attitude, whether they are found in the media or anywhere else, should simply be ignored as they do not desire to improve the lives of people. They are starved for attention and like an infant act out in order to attract some attention from others. Muslims should not circulate and pass on videos or other content which are linked to people like this as they are playing right into their hands and giving them the attention they so badly desire. Debating with these people is a

complete waste of time because of their evil intention and behaviour. Muslims should instead place their efforts in other useful places which benefit them and others in both worlds.

## Balanced Spending

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a celebrity and how they earned and spent their wealth. The Holy Quran has labelled those who are wasteful as the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

*“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.”*

The comparison has been made to the Devil for several reasons. First of all, the people who spend wealth excessively on unnecessary things often do so in haste without thinking things through meaning, an impulse spender. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that being hasty is from the Devil while thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim truly pondered over what they desired to purchase they would not spend on unnecessary and extravagant things as this is not a sign of a true muslim.

In addition, when one spends on unnecessary and extravagant things especially, excessively they in most cases are only fuelling the companies



who make a profit by distracting people from right guidance, such as the entertainment industry, which is the Devil's main and ultimate goal.

Spending wastefully always distracts one from preparing for the hereafter as this person dedicates much time to earning wealth, spending it wastefully and enjoying what they acquired. Distracting a muslim from preparing for the hereafter is another goal of the Devil.

Finally, the verse quoted earlier specifically mentions the ingratitude of the Devil. In reality, the one who spends wastefully on unnecessary things does so because they too are ungrateful over what they already possess. If they possessed true gratitude it would prevent them from acting in this manner. Islam does not prohibit one from spending on necessary things in fact it encourages muslims to do so. And even spending on unnecessary things is acceptable if it is done occasionally and without extravagance as this is something which is disliked by Allah, the Exalted, and leads to wasting wealth. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 141:

*“...And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.”*

## Being Suspicious

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the importance of having a positive mind-set when interacting with people. It is important for muslims to avoid a particular negative mentality which is mentioned in chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

*“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin...”*

Unfortunately, adopting this negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. First of all, interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins, such as backbiting and slandering. In all cases, a muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. For example, how many times has a nation gone to war over an assumption and suspicion? The vast majority of scandals which are found in the media are based on assumptions. Even laws have been created which support the use of assumptions and suspicion. This often leads to fractured and broken relationships as people with this mind-set always believe others are taking a dig at them through their words or actions. This prevents one from taking advice from others as they believe they are only being mocked by the one giving advice. And it prevents one from giving advice as they believe the other person will not pay any attention to what they say. And a person will refrain from advising the one who possesses this negative mind-set as they believe it will only lead to an argument. This leads to other negative traits, such as bitterness.

It is important for muslims to accept any good advice they are given even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them. They should strive to interpret things, where possible, in a positive way which leads to a positive mentality.

## Gifts or Giver

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different life aims and goals of people and how they worked in order to achieve them.

It is important for muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they achieved what they desired therefore there is no need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. These muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

These muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a muslim must desire gifts and blessings then it is best to aim for religious blessings as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

## **Means Not End**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stresses of life and how to navigate through them without becoming affected by mental disorders, such as depression. One thing which can help a muslim to achieve this is to understand that every worldly blessing they possess 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.

To conclude, muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

## Message in a Bottle

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to discuss. It reported on the importance of learning from the past.

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.

## **Perfection and Permanence**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how people strive to create the perfect life. It is quite obvious when observing most people that they strive hard in order to beautify their material world. In fact, many go beyond this by striving to mould their life so that it becomes perfect and permanent. For example, people spend large amounts of money on trying to build the perfect home while hoping that it will endure. Companies make billions out of this desire of people to be perfect and timeless, such as cosmetic companies. Some people endure painful operations in an attempt to defy time and achieve perfection. This shows that there is something within a person's soul which desires perfection and permanence. But the strange thing is that no matter how much money one spends and no matter how much effort they dedicate these two things namely, perfection and permanence, are not obtainable in this world. This internal desire was placed inside people to make them strive for perfection and permanence in a place where they do exist namely, the hereafter.

Unfortunately, some misunderstood this desire and misplaced it. Muslims should therefore not make this mistake but instead place this desire in the correct place by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Only then will they be able to fulfil this desire and achieve true perfection and permanence.

## **Social Freedom**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on social freedom and the rights of people especially, women. 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.

## Success is Simple

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how some people achieve success only after becoming experts in their field. It is important to note, Islam teaches muslims that they do not need to become scholars in order to achieve real success in both worlds. All they require is to strive to learn and act on the simple teachings of Islam according to their ability and potential. This is easily achievable by a non-scholar. For example, a muslim can begin by understanding and acting on three verses of the Holy Quran which will guide them towards eternal success. The first is chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

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

According to this verse a muslim has been guaranteed right guidance and success in all aspects of their life as long as they fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience.

The next verse is found in 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.”*

This verse helps a muslim to overcome all difficulties they could possibly face during their life. A muslim must understand each situation has many beneficial wisdoms behind it which are not immediately apparent. One can find many examples within their own life when they believed something was good but it ended up being bad and vice versa. Therefore, they should patiently endure each difficulty knowing it is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdoms behind them.

The final verse is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

This verse reminds muslims that no difficulty or obligation they must fulfil is beyond their strength to endure or fulfil. This understanding removes impatience and removes despair when facing difficulties and inspires one with the strength to overcome laziness and fulfil their duties both towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

Islam teaches simple yet far reaching lessons which muslims should study and act on. But they do not require one to become a scholar in order to achieve a successful outcome, unlike many worldly things which require a person to become an expert before they can obtain success.

## **True Possessions**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a gang of thieves who had been caught and sentenced to prison after the police recovered the property they had stolen.

It is important for muslims to understand that this in reality is the worse situation for the thieves as they were not only sent to prison but they will also not be able to enjoy the wealth they had stolen after they are released. Meaning, they were judged and sentenced to prison over stealing something they no longer possess. This is the biggest loss as one could argue if the thieves were judged and sentenced to prison for stealing property they still possess it would have been far better for them as they could have enjoyed it after they were released from prison.

Muslims should understand a fact that on Judgment Day they will be judged over their actions, both worldly and religious. But the major and important difference is that their worldly actions, such as obtaining unnecessary and excess wealth and properties, will be turned into dust by Allah, the Exalted. Just like the thieves who were punished over property they no longer possessed so will people be judged over their worldly actions and possessions they no longer possess. Can one imagine being sent to Hell over worldly things such as, fame and fortune they no longer possess? The only things which will still be in their possession on Judgment Day and which will aid them in their greatest moment of need are their religious actions meaning, righteous deeds. So each muslim must



decide where they should dedicate the majority of their efforts. Either to worldly things and deeds which will perish and turn into dust with this material world while they face the reckoning over them or dedicate the majority of their efforts to religious deeds which will endure and provide them company, shelter and aid on a Great Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “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.”*

## Good or Bad

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on taking a step back in order to assess what is truly beneficial and harmful in one's life. When a muslim observes the teachings of Islam they will find that certain worldly blessings have been described in a positive way but in other places it has been described in a negative way. This is because in reality most things are not innately good or bad. What makes them good or bad is whether they take one towards the obedience and pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, or not. For example, the Holy Quran has described a spouse as a way of finding tranquillity, mercy and affection. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 21:

*“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...”*

But the same Holy Quran has also warned that a spouse and children can be enemies to a muslim as well. Chapter 64 At Taghabun, verse 14:

*“O you who have believed, indeed, among your spouses and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them...”*

This indicates that they become a source of tranquillity when they encourage one towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. But one's family can become an enemy to them if they divert them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

So muslims should regularly assess and judge the worldly blessings they possess in order to determine whether they encourage them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, or divert them from it. And if necessary take steps in order to benefit themselves in both worlds. Whoever does this self-assessment regularly during their lives will find that their final judgment on the Day of Resurrection will be easy as they remained obedient to Allah, the Exalted. But if they fail to do this self-assessment they will get lost in the material world and fail to prepare for the hereafter adequately which will lead to a difficult accountability and a potential severe punishment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

*“Say, [O Muhammad], “If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command.”*

## The Virus – Part 1

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and how fast it is spreading across the world. It is important for muslims to understand that Islam teaches muslims to achieve true trust in Allah, the Exalted, by utilizing the means He has created in a balanced way and then trust that the outcome Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for them. In the case of the Corona Virus, muslims should take reasonable precautions, such as good hygiene, without going overboard like desiring to wear a hazmat suit in public. But they should trust and understand a fact namely, only the things which Allah, the Exalted, decrees can affect them. Meaning, if Allah, the Exalted, wills some benefit for someone the entire creation put together cannot prevent them from gaining it. And if Allah, the Exalted, desires to afflict someone with something, such as an illness, the entire creation put together cannot save them from it. This has been made clear in Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 17:

*“And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him. And if He touches you with good - then He is over all things competent.”*

Islam teaches a balanced approach whereby one takes reasonable precautions which Allah, the Exalted, has created but trusts that what Allah, the Exalted, has decreed is inevitable and best for them even if they fail to

observe the wisdom behind it. This attitude and belief prevents paranoia and stress. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

In addition, the rapid spread of this virus should encourage muslims to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, and strive in His obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And they should especially fulfil their duty of kindly commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge. This is because the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when immorality becomes widespread and public people will be afflicted with new diseases which never occurred before them.

## **The Virus – Part 2**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and the precautions society should take in order to keep them safe from it. It is amazing how these steps which non Islamic nations are trying to implement now were advised by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over 1400 years ago. For example, people are being advised to wash their hands regularly throughout the day whereas, Islam advises a muslim to wash their hands, arms, faces and feet five times a day which is required to offer the obligatory prayer. In fact, a Hadith found in Imam Malik's, Muwatta, Book 2, Hadith number 37, advises that a true believer maintains the state of ablution throughout the day. Meaning, they not only wash these parts of the body for the five obligatory prayers but do so every time they use the toilet in order to remain in ablution throughout the day. In addition, muslims have been advised to wash their hands before and after meals. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 258. They have been advised to wash their hands before going to bed and after waking up from sleep. This has been advised in Hadiths found in Sunan Ibn Majah, numbers 3297 and 394. Put simply, people have been advised to maintain good hygiene and Islam has declared cleanliness to be half of faith in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 223.

In addition, people have been advised to avoid going out in public unnecessarily, which has been advised by Islam so long ago as it often leads to vain and sinful things. In fact, this is an element of salvation according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406.

People have been warned not to unnecessarily socialize with others. Islam has encompassed this teaching by declaring one should either speak good or remain silent in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3971, which indicates limiting socializing with others.

Finally, it has been stressed that people should support each other, such as food supplies, through this difficulty but Islam has been teaching the importance of this for over a millennium. For example, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893, advises that Allah, the Exalted, will aid the one who supports others.

To conclude, Muslims should implement these teachings in order to show the true face of Islam to the world.

## **The Virus – Part 3**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the attitude of some people during the outbreak of the Corona Virus. It is important for muslims to show the world the true teachings of Islam by practically demonstrating the behaviour of a true muslim. It is obvious many people all over the world are going through difficulties because of the virus such as, financial difficulties. Therefore, a muslim should never take advantage of these difficulties in any way, such as increasing the price of their products knowing people are desperate. Or by lowering the wages of their employees knowing they will tolerate this behaviour because of the difficulty they are facing. It is vital for people to recognize a muslim not through their Islamic dress but through their behaviour. People should recognize the greatness of Islam through this. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, that a muslim selling something should reveal its defects to the buyer before they purchase it as lying will only remove the blessings of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should therefore never take advantage of the difficulties of others especially, in a time of widespread difficulty and stress. If anything muslims should make things easier for others by offering them any aid possible. As long as muslims are busy helping others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will continue supporting them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. The one who receives the support of Allah, the Exalted, can never fail in this world or in the next.



## The Virus – Part 4

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the reaction of many countries to the Corona Virus outbreak and their attempt at reducing its spread.

It is important for muslims to fulfill the command in the chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

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

It is vital for muslims to obey the government during all matters which do not contradict the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, in those matters which are beneficial to the general public. Muslims should follow the advice and commands given by their government and not cause further problems for society and Islam by ignoring them.

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204, that

religion is being sincere to others which includes those in authority. This means muslims must support them in matters which are beneficial and protects the society from harm, such as the social restrictions which have been imposed by governments.

Finally, this Hadith also mentions being sincere towards the general public. This applies to all members of the society irrespective of their faith or if one personally knows them or not. Even though, a muslim or their loved ones may not be at risk of serious harm by being infected with the Corona Virus there are people in society which are at serious risk, such as death. In order to be sincere to these people a muslim must obey the restrictions imposed by the government as these restrictions aim to protect them and prevent the spread of the virus.

## **The Virus – Part 5**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stricter measures the government was taking in order to combat the spread of the Corona Virus.

As people have been placed in a lockdown type scenario it should remind muslims of being placed on permanent lockdown meaning, death. The same way people are rushing in order to stock pile their daily necessities, such as food, a muslim should hasten towards stock piling the necessities required in order to succeed in both worlds namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims should take the opportunity of being on lockdown by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge in order to prepare for their permanent lockdown which will occur soon at an unknown time.

In addition, muslims should make use of the time they have at home by truly reflecting on their life, actions and the path they are on. It is vital to understand that the one who assesses and judges their deeds during their life sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be inspired to improve their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. This will ensure they have an easy judgment on the Day of Resurrection. But those who fail to make use of their time by judging themselves will continue in

heedlessness and therefore find a strict and difficult judgment on the Day of Resurrection.

Finally, this reflection is unlikely to occur when one worships excessively especially, in a language they do not understand. This reflection only occurs when one studies reliable Islamic knowledge. There is plenty of knowledge available at the click of a button so muslims are left with the no excuses.

## The Virus – Part 6

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and the physical restrictions associated with it, such as not leaving one's house unnecessarily.

It is important for muslims to realize the countless blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, as this realization will inspire them with true gratitude which is to use each blessing they possess correctly according to teachings of Islam. Muslims often fail to acknowledge these blessings such as having the freedom to leave one's house whenever they wish.

In addition, this true gratitude is extremely important as the Holy Quran warns that those who changed in a negative way such as failing to show true gratitude only caused Allah, the Exalted, to test them with difficulties by removing these blessings. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

*“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”*

For example, it is obvious to anyone who observes most Mosques during the obligatory congregational prayers that the vast majority of local muslims do not attend them. Attending the Mosques is the very essence of showing gratitude for being granted a Mosque by Allah, the Exalted. But as many muslims failed to show this true gratitude Allah, the Exalted, changed the situation by closing them through this virus outbreak.

Muslims should therefore regularly assess the blessings they possess so that they show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using them according to His pleasure and commands. This will cause things to change in a positive way and increase the blessings they are granted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

## **Benefit Yourself**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the good things a famous person who passed away did and those who praised them. It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered.

In addition, the people will supplicate for them after they pass away which is definitely answered as it has been recorded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 10:

*“...saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith...”*

Finally, a person who treated others kindly will gain their intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a day people will be desperate for the intercession of others. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7439.

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Therefore, a muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others as in reality they are only benefiting themselves in this world and the next. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

*“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself...”*



## Home in Paradise

I read a news article which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how one can avoid arguments and instead discuss things in a mature way. It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate with others in order to promote themselves and their opinion. They should instead present the information in order to promote the truth. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The one who aims to promote the truth will not argue. Only the one who is trying to promote themselves will. Contrary to what many believe winning arguments does not increase one's rank in anyway. The only time a person's rank in both worlds increases is when one avoids arguing and instead presents the truth or accepts it when it is presented to them. A muslim should avoid going back and forth with others when discussing things as this is a characteristic of arguing. It is important to avoid arguing as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised a home in the middle of Paradise for the one who gives up arguing even when they are correct. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993. It is this correct mentality which has been indicated in chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

*“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best...”*

A muslim should understand that their duty is not to force people to accept something. Their duty is to simply present the truth as being forceful is a characteristic of arguing. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

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

## Quick Fix

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the behaviour and attitude of some criminals who chose a life of crime as they desired to obtain wealth in an easy and simple way.

It is important for muslims to avoid this type of quick fix mentality in both worldly and religious matters. Unfortunately, some muslims have adopted this attitude. Whenever they encounter problems instead of following the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by remaining patient and firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, they instead search for a quick fix solution desiring a short spiritual exercise which can solve all their problems. This was not the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though they faced more severe difficulties. A muslim should simply understand that if they cannot lawfully obtain worldly things without effort how can they obtain religious blessings without effort? The greatest spiritual exercise one can perform is remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. There is no quick fix to problems as the universe was created in such a way that one must put in effort in order to obtain things. If a muslim desires to overcome difficulties and obtain blessings they must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

## Perception

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the importance of having a positive mind-set when dealing with worldly issues.

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...”*

## **Listening to Knowledge**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how the exchanging of information and knowledge has increased over the years especially, over social media.

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.

## What You Like

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on different charity projects and how people sacrificed the things they liked in order to please the needy.

It is important for muslims to understand the importance of chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

*“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”*

This verse makes it clear that a person cannot be a true believer meaning, they will possess a defect in their faith, until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Even though many believe this verse applies to wealth but it in fact means much more. It includes every blessing which a muslim likes and loves. For example, muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse to dedicate it to

the things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have to do overtime and give up their sleep yet how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is truly strange.



## **Something New**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on discovering new things and experiences. Some muslims have adopted a mentality whereby they are always trying to discover different things and teachings in respect to Islam. They purposely seek lectures and knowledge which is supposedly new and different from what they have already experienced. Even though, this is not an evil characteristic it is an attitude which can lead to misguidance. This can occur when one fails to act on the knowledge they have already heard and studied yet strive to experience new Islamic information and knowledge. Simply put, if a muslim has failed to understand and act on what they already know how can learning new things benefit them? Acting on what one has already listened to and studied is the very reason why the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, often repeat key pieces of information. For example, Allah, the Exalted, only needed to command muslims to establish their prayers once yet He has done it many times throughout the Holy Quran. The same way a student cannot progress to the next level or academic year without acting on the knowledge they have already studied a muslim will not be able to progress towards the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, unless they act on the knowledge they already possess even if they search and listen to new things. Some foolishly seek knowledge connected to higher levels of piety without even acting on the basic principles of faith such as, refraining from lying and backbiting.

The Holy Quran has made it clear that revising important information one already possesses is beneficial and the correct attitude as this person is

more likely to act on their knowledge than the one who only seeks new knowledge. In fact, this attitude benefits the believers. Therefore, if one does not obtain benefit from being reminded about things they already know then they must reassess their faith. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 55:

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

## Step By Step

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a muslim who made some unnecessary lawful life choices which eventually led them to doing unlawful things.

It is important to understand a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discusses this mentality and is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. It warns that when one journeys close to a forbidden zone, even though they are still in a lawful area, a time may come when they take an incorrect step and end up in the forbidden zone. This is like the person who spends time with others who smoke even if they do not smoke themselves. But with the passing of time smoking will seem normal to them which is one step closer to them becoming a smoker.

Similarly, when one excessively indulges in unnecessary lawful things they move that much closer to the things which are unlawful such as, wasting wealth. And with the passing of time the unlawful things which seemed unimaginable for them to commit becomes a normal thing in their eyes. Then it is only a matter of time until they too commit those unlawful things.

This is the reason why it is important for muslims to be on guard against over indulging in things which are unnecessary even if they are lawful as

this attitude will protect their faith and honour in the long run which the Hadith quoted earlier declares.

## **Understanding the Role**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned how the marriage rates in a certain country were decreasing over time. The people claimed that they did not desire to take on the responsibilities of marriage.

If a person accepted a job offer without knowing the information linked to it, such as the responsibilities of the job, their salary and any insurance offered, this person would be labelled absolutely crazy by others. An intelligent person would never accept a job offer without knowing these important details. Yet, many people are desperate to take on certain duties without possessing knowledge on the responsibilities attached to them. For example, these people are desperate to get married yet they possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities and duties of a husband or a wife and what the rights of each spouse are. This is a major reason why the divorce rates amongst muslims has skyrocketed over recent years. Similarly, these types of people are desperate to have children yet possess little or no knowledge on the responsibilities of raising a child, such as the rights of parents and children. Again, this is a major cause why the number of muslim youth in prisons has greatly increased in recent years. Couples have children but fail to raise them in the correct way. How could they when they do not possess the knowledge to do so?

It is vital for muslims to first learn and understand the responsibilities of the things they desire to do before they step into the situation. As without this

knowledge they will cause nothing but trouble for themselves and others. The same way they do not accept a job offer without knowing its responsibilities they should never take on other duties which are harder than a worldly job, such as marriage, without knowing the responsibilities involved.

## **Either In or Out**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a prominent figure in society who decided to take a step back from the role which came with being a member of his family. It seemed as though he was forced to decide whether to be an active member and fulfil this role fully or to completely be cut off from it and his family.

Unfortunately, this type of attitude is extremely common amongst muslims especially, the Asian community. They often give extreme ultimatums to their relatives meaning, they are either with them or completely cut off from them. This contradicts the teachings of Islam as they base their reaction on their own feelings and desires instead of the teachings of Islam. For example, if a son wants to marry someone who is lawful in Islam for him to marry but as the parents dislike his choice they give him an ultimatum. Namely, he either chooses not to marry her or if he does they will cut ties with him. This behaviour completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. It is strange how these people do not understand that they are the ones who will grieve over the outcome more than anyone else. And even if they claim to be completely pleased with cutting ties with their relative it is undoubtedly a major sin. In fact, it is such a severe sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984, that the one who severs the ties of kinship will not enter Paradise. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, severs ties with the one who behaves in such a manner which prevents them from being content with their incorrect decision. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987. A muslim should therefore only turn away from the decision of their relatives or friends if it is unlawful. If it is

lawful but they disagree with their choice they should kindly express their opinion but if the person decides to go ahead with their choice they should accept this and maintain ties with them. They should continue supporting them and never insult them if their choice ends up being a bad one. It is important to remember people are not perfect. This will ensure the relatives or friends continue maintaining ties and respecting each other. This is a duty all muslims must fulfil.



## **Real Love**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned how some young adults from certain communities ran away from their homes for the sake of what they believed was true love.

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.”*

## **Being Observant**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the problems which are occurring in the middle east and how countless people are suffering. 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.

## **Understand Your Companions**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how a person is affected by a friend. There are countless examples in the world of how a person inspired their friend to take the wrong path in life which caused them serious trouble, such as prison. One should not only be cautious of people who possess bad characteristics as they will influence their friends in a negative way which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. But a muslim should also be cautious over the people who seem to possess genuine love for them especially those who do not possess real knowledge. This is because the one who does not possess real knowledge will sometimes advise their loved ones incorrectly believing they have fulfilled and shown their love to their companion. For example, a wife may advise her tired husband to offer his obligatory prayer at home instead of at the Mosque with congregation. Even though according to some scholars it is permissible to offer one's obligatory prayer at home yet, this advice will only take one away from one of the greatest traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will only take them further away from Allah, the Exalted. This wife may believe she has behaved in a loving way even though she has not. This is why gaining useful knowledge is extremely important and a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This is because some things may seem difficult outwardly yet many blessings are contained within them. And many things may seem easy and even lawful yet they only take one away from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should be cautious and remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not get fooled by the advice a loved one gives. They should not assume the advice will benefit them just because it comes from a beloved companion.

## Failures

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person whose company went bankrupt after they faced some difficulties and the regrets they had over this issue. It is important for muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.”*

In this world one's regret will always be followed by another chance or other options which they can pursue in order to gain success once again. But the regret and failure of the hereafter is something which cannot be rectified meaning, there are no second chances in the next world. No one will have the opportunity to return to Earth in order to act differently.

Therefore, every muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world. This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality

muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

*“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance?”*

## **Void in Life**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the concept of a midlife crisis. A person who experiences this often questions their purpose and seems to feel a huge void in their life even though they may possess many things and achieved much worldly success. This often occurs as these people are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation which is to gain knowledge about Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly. This is similar to a person who owns the latest mobile phone which has many features yet, due to a fault it fails to fulfil its primary goal which is to make phone calls. No matter how good these other features are the owner will always feel a void in respect to it as the phone does not fulfil its primary goal of existence. Similarly, a person will feel a void in their life even if they possess many worldly things. This feeling affects muslims and non-muslims. It is obvious why non-muslims feel like this as they could not be further from fulfilling the purpose of their creation so no matter what they achieve they eventually feel this void in their life. It occurs to those muslims who may even fulfil their obligatory duties but as they fail to strive to gain and act on the vital knowledge needed to fulfil their purpose correctly they experience this void. In most cases, they do not even understand the Arabic language so performing worship simply does not fill this void. One will not fill this void until they strive to fulfil the purpose of creation which is to gain knowledge on Allah, the Exalted, so that they can obey and worship Him correctly throughout every moment of their life.



## **Types of Regrets**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the biography of a famous person. The things they achieved and the regrets they have.

Muslims should understand that regrets can be classified into two categories. The first are the regrets over worldly things such as not getting married or having children. The second category are the regrets one will have in their grave and on Judgment Day, such as not making better use of their time in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The worldly regrets, irrespective of what they are, will never be permanent as they will either end when one fulfils their desire, changes their mind or dies. They are temporary in nature as the maximum time one can have this type of regret is until their death. And they are not so significant as these regrets may lead to sadness but not severe punishment or torment. In addition, these regrets will end if a person reaches Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the regrets of the hereafter are long lasting as the time in the grave and on Judgment Day will be much longer than one's life on this Earth. They will not end until one enters Paradise which may not happen or it may occur after an extremely long time as a single day in the hereafter is equivalent to a thousand years on Earth. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 47:

*“...And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.”*

Finally, these regrets are very significant as they may well lead to a severe punishment and torment in the hereafter.

Therefore, a muslim should ponder over this and be kind to themselves by striving to remove the potential regrets they will have in the grave and on Judgment Day before they try to remove the regrets of this world. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

*“He will say, “Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.””*

## Role Models

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the life of a celebrity who had passed away. It mentioned their legacy and the different things they achieved in their life. Even though, they achieved much worldly success there were still things in their life which tainted their successful legacy, such as crimes and allegations. If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable muslim and non-muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. 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...”*

There is no goal greater than this in this world. In fact, this is what people irrespective of their faith strive to achieve. And Allah, the Exalted, has placed all of it in the footsteps of his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

*“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”*

It is simple, if a person desires worldly and religious success they should follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they choose a path other than his whatever tainted success they achieve will eventually become a burden for them and it may lead to a punishment on a Great Day.

## Where is Peace?

I read a news article which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stresses of modern day work and finding peace in one's life. 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.

## **Long Plans**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a large scale project and how things were not going according to the initial plan such as the estimated cost of the project increasing dramatically. Muslims should understand that making long term worldly plans is not the wisest decision as these things very rarely work out as planned. One only needs to reflect on their own life and their own long term plans to recognize this truth. It is always best to plan on a short term basis as this is more achievable and does not result in such emotional or financial difficulties when things do not work out as planned. On the other hand, failure in long term plans will lead to more serious emotional and financial difficulties.

In addition, long term plans always causes one's mind to focus on this material world which distracts them from preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will only lead to difficulties in both worlds. But when one makes short term worldly plans it does not distract them from the bigger picture meaning, preparing for the hereafter.

A muslim must understand that they can plan as much as they want but ultimately only what Allah, the Exalted, has planned and decided will occur. So it is best to minimise this as much as possible and instead focus on fulfilling one's necessities and responsibilities in this world and preparing for their journey to the hereafter. This is what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih

Bukhari, number 6416. He advised muslims to live in this material world as a stranger or traveller. Allah, the Exalted, will bless this behaviour so that the muslim finds peace and happiness in both worlds.



## What is Good and Bad

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the many difficulties people across the world are facing. It is important for muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

There are many examples throughout the teachings of Islam which demonstrate this. For example, Qarun was an extremely wealthy person who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him. Many people then and now may consider his wealth to be a good thing but as it led him to pride it became a means of his destruction. So in his case being wealthy was a bad thing. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verses 79-81.

*“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who*

*believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves."*

On the other hand, the third rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Usman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was also wealthy yet he used his wealth in the correct way. In fact, once after donating a large amount of wealth he was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that nothing could harm his faith after that day. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701. So in his case wealth was a good thing.

To conclude, a muslim should remember that every difficulty they face has wisdoms behind it even if they do not observe them. So they should not believe something is good or bad from a worldly point of view. Meaning, if the thing encourages them towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. 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."*

## **Choosing a Different Path**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a person who desired to pursue a specific lawful occupation and the difficulty she was receiving from others about her decision, especially from her relatives.

It is important to understand that generally when one chooses a path which is different from the path of others, such as their relatives and friends, they will face criticism and resistance from them. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from a person's relatives. For example, when a muslim decides to concentrate more on acting on the teachings of Islam and if it is something their family have not pursued themselves then they will face criticism from them. They will be labelled foolish and extreme by those who they believed would support them on their path. It is important for muslims to remain steadfast on the lawful path they choose and trust in the help of Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in order to overcome these difficulties.

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same

reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

To conclude, as long as one's path in life is lawful they should remain steadfast and not be deterred by the criticism of others. But this does not mean they should not try to improve their situation and character. It means they should not be deterred from pursuing their lawful choice according to the teachings of Islam.

## Faith Brings Peace

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the increase of crimes within London over the past decade. Unfortunately, there are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But this increase in crimes proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

*“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”*

## **Prioritising Correctly Brings Peace**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the difficulty in balancing and fulfilling all of one's worldly duties in the modern world and the stress associated with this. Muslims should understand that if they desire to avoid this common stress they should prioritise each task and responsibility correctly. This is only possible when one does this according to the teachings of Islam instead of their desires or the desires of others. Whenever one reorders the list of priorities advised in Islam it always leads to difficulties and stress. For example, when one strives excessively in the material world beyond their needs and necessities thereby neglecting their other responsibilities such as correctly raising their children it will lead them to nothing but stress from both what they acquired and from their misguided children. The one who does not prioritise their duties correctly is like the university student who prioritises having fun over preparing for their exams. This only leads them to obtaining a poor degree and a difficult job. Because of prioritising incorrectly they gave up an easy life through a good job for a few years of fun at university which leads to a difficult life in the long run.

Incorrectly prioritising affects every aspect of one's life and it can lead to sins if one obeys people over Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is important for muslims to follow the priority set by Islam which begins with obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, above all others. This is only possible to obtain through seeking and acting on Islamic knowledge. Through this, a muslim will find the precious and rare gift of peace in this world and everlasting bliss in the hereafter.

## **True Belief**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the faith of some people and their claims that their belief and obedience to their God is in their heart and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's 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.

## Balanced Mental State

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the emotional state of people who try to balance different aspects of their life, such as their work, personal and social life. One thing which can help a person to avoid stress associated with this is by adopting a balanced state of mind. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themselves to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23, of the Holy Quran:

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

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face



punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

A balanced state of mind is always best which prevents the negative effects of extreme moods. This will take a muslim closer to true peace of mind and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

## **Peace of Mind and Body**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the mentality of many people who are always striving to achieve more in this material world even though they have already gained much worldly success. Even though, Islam does not prohibit this type of mentality as long as unlawful things are avoided a muslim should understand an important reality. It is obvious that peace of mind is not obtained with many worldly possessions, such as wealth. In fact, these people are often the ones who end up depressed to the point they even commit suicide. Human worldly desires have been created in such a way that no matter what one obtains they always desire more irrespective of their faith and social status. For example, Pharaoh who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, obtained every worldly blessing imaginable yet, he still did not obtain peace of mind and satisfaction. Instead his desire for more pushed him to such a stage that he desired to be worshipped like a God. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

*“And said, "I am your most exalted lord.””*

No matter what desires a person fulfils it only leads them to desiring more things. A person who owns two houses wants three; the millionaire wants to become a billionaire. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6439, that the person who has one valley of gold would only desire another. A muslim who desires true peace of mind, which is more valuable

than the treasures of the Earth, should therefore limit their worldly desires. The more they limit them and only fulfil their necessities and responsibilities the more they will obtain peace of mind. This mentality closes the doors of preoccupation and striving for more worldly things which in turn gives rest to both the mind and body. If a muslim couples this with striving in the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience, then they will be granted true peace of mind which extends to every aspect of their life in both worlds. But the more worldly desires they have the more their mind and body will be preoccupied with them and thus the further from true peace of mind they will be.

## Hope vs Wishful Thinking

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the funeral of a muslim who openly and persistently committed major sins. Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

*"...Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people."*

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a muslim is in danger of dying as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

They should not be fooled into believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. As true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is supported by obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through actions. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Failing to do this and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is not hope in His mercy it is merely wishful thinking which has no weight or significance. This has been clearly warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

## **Leaders: Old vs New**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the leaders of the modern world. It was quite obvious that they take advantage of their position as they misuse the tax payers money on their own personal things and unnecessary events. It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's money on their own personal things they would spend their own personal money on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

It is important for muslims to select the righteous predecessors as their role models and adopt their characteristics. For example, muslims must fulfil their duties towards all those under their care which has been advised in a Hadith, found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. This does not mean one should not care about themselves. It means they should fulfil their own personal duties and then strive to fulfil their duties in respect to their dependents without going overboard. They must first obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then fulfil the rights of people.

## **Destiny is Like Medicine**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the important role of doctors and their impact on their patients. 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.”*

## **Ignorance is Bliss**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on some people who travelled to a foreign country and broke a law which they were unaware of during their trip. It is important to understand that the famous statement ignorance is bliss is not true especially, in respect to religious affairs and the hereafter. Unfortunately, some muslims believe just because they do not know an Islamic rule they are exempt from obeying it and Allah, the Exalted, will not hold them accountable for it. This is one of the worse types of ignorance as Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that there are no excuses and muslims must learn and act on the teachings of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared this to be a duty on all muslims in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. It is a trap of the Devil to believe ignorance is an acceptable excuse and one does not need to gain knowledge about Islam. If a government does not accept this excuse how can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to? Just like a person who takes on a responsibility is expected to know the rules attached to it, such as being a licensed driver, the one who accepts Islam as their religion is responsible for learning the rules linked to it. Therefore, muslims must avoid ignorance as it will not benefit them in this world and it will certainly not aid them in the hereafter.



## Outcome of Tests

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the widespread difficulties muslims all over the world are facing. Even though tests and trials have affected believers since the dawn of time particularly in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet it seems like the modern day tests only lead to more difficulties and humiliation for muslims. Whereas, the tests which the righteous predecessors faced only led to their honour in both worlds. The main reason for this difference in the outcome and result of tests is that when the righteous predecessors faced tests in fact, greater tests than the modern day muslims, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, they faced their tests and difficulties while sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny. This resulted in them safely passing the test and receiving great honour and blessings from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Whereas, many muslims in this day and age face tests but do not remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They fail to understand that success and honour through tests is only granted to those who remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whereas, being disobedient only leads to disgrace. Therefore, muslims should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on an edge whereby they are only obedient to Him in times of ease and turn away from Him angrily and disobediently in times of difficulty. This is not real servant hood or obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Simply put, no action will aid muslims in the long run if it is not based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience will only lead from one difficulty to another, one disgrace to another. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 147:

*“What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe?...”*

## **List of Priorities**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on sponsoring animals. Firstly, it is important to note Islam teaches muslims the importance of treating all creatures kindly. For example, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 378, mentions a man who was forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, because he fed a thirsty dog. This Hadith concludes by advising that being kind to all creatures' leads to reward. None the less, one of the reasons why humanity across the globe is suffering is because many people have prioritised things incorrectly. For example, some are more concerned about the welfare of animals than humans. This is quite obvious when one observes the behaviour of some animal lovers. The majority of muslims have given striving for the temporal world priority over the permanent hereafter. This is obvious when one observes their typical daily routine. Even some of the muslims who try to please Allah, the Exalted, prioritise things incorrectly for example, they give preference to voluntary goods deeds over acting on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This shift in priorities only occurred when muslims stopped acting on the teachings of Islam and instead acted according to their own desires. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, prioritised everything correctly thereby fulfilling the rights of everyone as they did not act according to their own desires. They instead acted according to the teachings and the list of priorities set by Islam. This is evident to anyone who has studied their lives.

Humanity as a whole and especially muslims will only find real success and progression in both worlds when they prioritise things correctly. This is only possible when one acts according to the teachings of Islam. Reordering this list of priorities will only lead to problems for humanity which is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history.

## Final Words

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the last words spoken by famous people before they passed away. It is common for people to enquire and pay extra attention to the final words of others whether they are passing away or leaving on a long journey. People have adopted this mentality as they know that someone's last words are often true and are very important. Therefore, muslims should reflect on the final verse of the Holy Quran to be revealed, which according to some scholars is chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

*“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged [i.e., treated unjustly].”*

Muslims should try to understand the importance of this verse as it is the final words revealed to mankind from Allah, the Exalted. He chose to remind mankind of the Day of Judgment and preparing for it over all other things He could have spoken about. Therefore, muslims should understand the reality of this Great Day so that they can prepare adequately for it. This is only achievable through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. No deed small or big will be overlooked or forgotten. All will be held accountable for every breath they took on this Earth. It is truly inevitable.

The other last words which are important to understand and act on is recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2698. They are the last words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He advised muslims on the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. Out of all the things he could have advised on he chose to mention the obligatory prayers. This alone should make one understand the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the prayer is the thing which separates disbelief from belief. Muslims feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, even though they believe in Him and call upon Him. But as most of them have failed to establish their obligatory prayers they have been cut off from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that establishing the obligatory prayers is the first barrier which protects them from misguidance. One only needs to reflect on the people they know who became misguided and in most cases the first step of their misguidance was failing to establish the obligatory prayers meaning, fulfilling them according to their etiquettes and conditions. When this barrier was destroyed then misguidance and committing major sins became easy. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

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

Therefore, muslims should act on the final words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by correctly establishing their obligatory prayers and encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. It is best to encourage them before it becomes

obligatory on them so that they become used to it by the time they reach this age. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495.

Muslims should not make up lame excuses when failing this duty as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden someone with a duty they cannot fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

*“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...”*

## Justice

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a head of state who abused his power by granting immunity to corrupt people. One of the major reasons why society seems to be digressing is because people have abandoned acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6787, that previous nations were destroyed as the authorities would punish the weak when they broke the law but would pardon the rich and influential. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being the head of state even declared in this Hadith that if his own daughter committed a crime he would enforce the full legal punishment on her. Even though members of the general public might not be in a position to advise their leaders to remain just in their actions but they can influence them indirectly by acting justly in all their dealings and actions. For example, a muslim must act justly in respect to their dependents, such as their children, by treating them equally. This has been specifically advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3544. They should act justly in all their business dealings irrespective of who they deal with. If people act with justice on an individual level then communities can change for the better and in turn those who are in influential positions, such as politicians, will act justly whether they desire to or not.



## **Getting Along with People**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on interacting in a positive way with colleagues at work in order to function as a team. It is important to understand that Islam does not demand muslims to completely get along with all people. As people have been created differently and possess different characteristics it is not possible to get along with everyone. Because of a difference of mentalities people will always disagree with others who possess a differently mentality. The only person who may be able to achieve this is a two-faced person who changes their behaviour and attitude depending on who they are with. But even this person will eventually be exposed by Allah, the Exalted. Just because a person does not get along with others it does not mean they dislike them. It only means they differ in their attitudes and behaviour. Just like a school child who is not friends with every child in their class. It does not mean they dislike those who they are not friends with.

Therefore, a muslim should not become sad if they do not get along with everyone, even their own relatives. But it is a duty on all muslims to treat all others with respect and fulfil the rights of each person even if they do not get along with them as this is an important characteristic of a muslim. This is what Islam commands and if one acts in this way with everyone then they will find their interactions with people peaceful and beneficial in both worlds.

## Positivity

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the wake of a famous person and how the people attending it desired to treat the wake as a way of celebrating the person's achievements instead of mourning over their loss.

It is important for muslims to adopt a positive mind-set as it is a great tool to aid them when dealing with difficulties so that they remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a person faces difficulties they should always understand a truth that the difficulty could have been much worse. If it was a worldly problem they should be grateful it was not an affliction affecting their faith. Instead of dwelling on the immediate sadness which accompanies the difficulty they should concentrate on the end and the reward which is waiting for those who demonstrate patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. When a person loses a few blessings they should recount the countless blessings they still possess. In each difficulty, a muslim should remember the verse of the Holy Quran which reminds muslims that there are many hidden wisdoms to difficulties and tests which they have not observed. Therefore, the situation they are facing is better than the situation they desired. 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.”*

To conclude, a muslim should reflect on these facts and others so that they adopt a positive mind-set which is a key element in dealing with difficulties in a way which leads to countless blessings in both worlds. Remember, the cup is not half empty it is instead half full.

## Right Guidance

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the drastic increase in the number of youth getting involved in crime. Muslims must understand an important principle which can prevent the youth from reaching this outcome. Even though, there are many obligatory duties on Muslims yet, the greatest of them is establishing the obligatory prayers. This is when one performs the prayers while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes, such as performing them on time. This is because abandoning the obligatory prayers in most cases is the first step which leads to major sins and misguidance. This has been indicated in the Holy Quran. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

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

The obligatory prayers act as a barrier which protects one from this misguidance but the moment one destroys this barrier it is only a matter of time before they become misguided. This has been warned in chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 36:

*“And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion.”*

One only needs to reflect on the people they know who have become misguided and they will realize that, in most cases, the first step of their misguidance was abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Therefore, it is vital for muslims to establish their obligatory prayers correctly and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same. Parents must be proactive by encouraging children to offer their prayers even before they reach the age it becomes obligatory on them. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495. Delaying this important teaching will become a great regret for both the parents and the child as encouraging an older child to establish their obligatory prayers when they are not used to it is extremely difficult. Parents should remember that they will answer for their failure to rightly guide their children on Judgment Day as this was a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

*“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire...”*

## Avoiding Depression

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a case of suicide which was caused by depression and severe grief. 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.

## **Losing Reward**

I watched a news report a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a high ranking government official of Saudi Arabia discussing a potential plan the Saudi government was considering. It was considering completely opening the Visa applications so that people can perform the visitation to the holy city of Mecca, known as Umra, all year round. Currently, the Visas available are restricted to certain times in the year.

Even though, this is a good plan and should be carried out what was surprising was their intention for considering this plan. As the oil prices have been dropping over the years and the fact that the oil will eventually run out the Saudi government is taking steps by investing in other business opportunities all over the world in order to ensure they stay rich. Even though, this is not prohibited in Islam but the thing which is surprising is that their only reason for potentially allowing pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round was to gain more wealth. This intention the news report made very clear. It was very surprising as muslims should know the very famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. It advises that the actions of a person are judged based on their intention. If their intention behind their decision is only to gain more wealth then they will get no reward from Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they will gain is more wealth, which will eventually slip out of their hands. But if they intended to allow pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, more people would worship Allah, the Exalted, and gain countless good deeds, then they would have gained reward for their plan in both this world and in the next as well as gained the wealth they wanted.



In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4899, advises that whoever invites someone to something good gets the same reward as the one who performed the righteous action they were invited towards. This means if the Saudi government intended to please Allah, the Exalted, with their plan they would have got the same reward gained by every single person who performed the visitation meaning, Umra, simply because they invited them to perform this deed by extending the Visas to all year round. Can one imagine how much reward they would get while sitting in their homes?

The lesson to learn from this is simple. When one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, by adhering to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will gain blessings in both worlds. But if they act for the sake of the world they might gain something from the world but they will receive nothing in the hereafter. So it is important to think before acting as one can potentially lose an uncountable reward just because of their intention.

## **Your Legacy**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the achievements of a celebrity. It described their achievements as their legacy which they will leave behind for people to benefit from years after they have departed from this world.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Islam not only teaches muslims to send blessings ahead of them to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds but it also teaches them to leave a lovely legacy behind from which people can benefit from. In fact, when a muslim passes away and leaves behind anything which is useful, such as an ongoing charity in the form of a water well they will be rewarded for it. This is confirmed in Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4223. So a muslim should strive to perform righteous deeds and send forward as much good as possible but they should also try leaving a good legacy behind which will benefit them after they pass away.

Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themselves as the moment of

death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each muslim should ask themself what is their legacy?

## Spreading News

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a great problem society is facing namely, the spread of fake news within society. One can imagine how difficult this is to control especially in this time of social media. It is therefore important for muslims to act on the following verse of the Holy Quran and not spread information to others even if they believe they are benefiting others by doing so without verifying the information first. Meaning, they should ensure it comes from a reliable source and is accurate. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

*“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”*

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional harm. Unfortunately, many muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

In addition, with everything that is going on in the world and how it is affecting muslims it is even more important to verify information as warning others over things which did not happen only creates distress in society and furthers the rift between muslims and other communities. This contradicts Islamic teachings.

A muslim needs to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will not question why they did not share unverified information with others on Judgment Day. But He will certainly question them if they do share information with others, whether it is verified or not. Therefore, an intelligent muslim will only share verified information and anything which is not verified they will leave knowing they will not be held accountable for it.

## **Consequences of Actions**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the rise and fall of tyrannical leaders. 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.

## What People Owe You

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a mother who discussed how her son's behavior towards her changed after he got married. He neglected his mother and rarely contacted her after he moved away with his wife. But this mother learnt to live with what happened and claimed to understand that people come and go. The important lesson to learn from this is that when a muslim is blessed with a relationship, such as a child or a sibling, they should understand the true purpose of that relationship and act accordingly. In each case, they should learn and fulfill their responsibilities towards them according to the teachings of Islam to the best of their ability. But more importantly do all this for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as He is the one who has commanded them to fulfill the rights of the people in their lives. If one genuinely acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they will never expect nor demand anything from people. They will not overly rejoice when people do things for them nor will they grieve if they neglect them. As they fulfilled the rights of the person for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they only seek reward from Allah, the Exalted, not people. This would prevent a person becoming sad or depressed if their relative or friend neglected them after years of helping them. Unfortunately, many muslims form relationships with the wrong intention. They get married and have children for the sake of receiving something back from their spouse and children. In most cases, especially in this day and age they will be left disappointed if they adopt this attitude. It is important for each muslim to correct their intention and connect with people and forge relationships for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore only seek benefit and reward from Him. Whoever acts in this manner proves that they have put their trust in Allah, Exalted. The one who puts their trust in Allah, the Exalted, will not be let down in this world or the next. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:



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

Whoever adopts the incorrect intention and forms relationships for the sake of gaining a return from people have put their trust in people. And whoever relies and puts their trust in people will be let down, sooner or later.

This discussion does not mean a muslim should not be grateful to others for what they have done for them. As this is a part of thanking Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954. But it means if someone does not appreciate a muslim for what they have done they should not be bothered as they should be hoping for a return and reward from Allah, the Exalted, not people.

## Changes With Time

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It mentioned the changes which have occurred over time within culture and society. If one studies the lives of the righteous predecessors they will observe many differences between them and the muslims of today. One big difference is the way people respond to those who command good and forbid evil, which is a duty on all muslims according to their knowledge. It is important for muslims to understand this behavioural change as it can prevent many arguments and enmity growing between people. In the past muslims loved those who advised them to do good and warned them against bad things. In fact, they did not consider someone a sincere friend until they behaved in this manner with them. They actually even loved those who advised them on things which were not considered sins in Islam but were only disliked things. This is the major change which has occurred. Many muslims nowadays dislike being constructively criticized in this manner. In cases where unlawful things are occurring it is a duty on a muslim to gently and kindly warn against it according to the teachings of Islam even if others dislike their behaviour. But in most cases where others are not committing a sin but are merely committing things which are disliked it is better for a muslim not to criticize them over them as it will only lead to enmity, arguments and it can even cause one to give up advising others because of the negative response they receive. The exception is when the one being advised likes being advised in such a manner. Therefore, a muslim who desires to fulfil their duty and avoid arguments with others should command good and warn against the unlawful but leave aside things which do not fall within these two categories.

## **Strength of Muslims**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the extreme suffering of muslims all around the world, such as Palestine. Even though, much of the world's natural resources, such as oil, are in the hands of muslims yet, the muslims as a nation have very little influence on society and other nations. Muslims often blame others for this social weakness, such as the countries in the west. They blame their propaganda against muslims as the cause of this widespread social weakness and influence. Unfortunately, many do not understand that this was not the habit of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them. They were few in a number yet, overcame entire nations. This is because instead of finger pointing at others they looked in the mirror and assessed their own characters and changed for the better according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It was this sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which led to their strength even if they were few in number. Whereas, many muslims today are so busy pointing fingers at others that they do not reflect on their flaws and disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. This caused them to become satisfied with themselves, which according to some scholars, is the root of all evil traits. This is because the one who is satisfied with himself will not strive to search for their own faults nor will they correct them according to the teachings of Islam. This will always lead to bad characteristics and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when muslims break their covenant of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, their enemies will be granted power over them and they will freely take the belongings of muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, that a time will come when

muslims will be great in number but still have no value in the eyes of the world. This is because of their love for the material world and their dislike for death. The love of the material world will always cause one to turn away from preparing for the hereafter. This will result in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and thus the influence of the muslim nation will become insignificant.

Muslims should stop blaming others and instead reflect on their own character and correct it according to the teachings of Islam. This will cause them to strive for and love the hereafter. Allah, the Exalted, will then put their awe and respect in the hearts of the rest of society just like He done for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This will allow the Islamic nation to once again obtain strength and influence within society. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

*“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”*

## Stressing Over Children

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the stress of family life, such as raising children. Even though there are many things a person can learn and do to reduce this stress only one important thing will be discussed in this chapter. Every parent or legal guardian who raises a child will face two elements. The first is their own duty and responsibility towards the child under their care. For example, it is their responsibility to provide them with the necessities of life such as food, clothing and housing. In addition, they must arrange for both their worldly and religious education, such as teaching them the good manners discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

*“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...”*

The second element involves the child's own life choices. For example, whether they want to study hard to make something of themselves or be lazy. These choices can be between two lawful things, such as the example mentioned earlier or between right and wrong. For example, a child may have to choose between a life of crime or a lawful occupation. All children must eventually make these choices and cannot be forced to choose a particular path by someone else, such as their parent. In reality, parents

cannot constantly follow their children and somehow force them to make the right choices.

It is important for muslims to understand that they will be questioned and held accountable by Allah, the Exalted, regarding the first element, which is their duty and responsibilities given to them by Allah, the Exalted. But they will not be held accountable for the second element, which are the independent choices their children make. So a muslim should bear this in mind and concentrate fully on fulfilling their duty and not stress about the second element which is out of their control. The same way an intelligent person does not stress about the weather knowing controlling it is out of their hands they should not stress about the second element and instead concentrate on what is in their control and what they will be held accountable for.

## **Muslims in the Media**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the portrayal of muslims in the media especially, the entertainment industry. If one reflects for a moment they will realise that in most cases in the media, such as the movie industry, muslims are often represented in two ways. They are either shown to have an extreme mentality whereby, they misinterpret the teachings of Islam in order to harm innocent people. Or they are shown as care-free people who are only muslim by name while their actions clearly contradict Islamic teachings. For example, they are often shown as alcohol drinkers and clubbers. It is very rare to see muslims being portrayed correctly such as a balanced rightly-guided muslim who fulfils their obligatory duties and takes part in the material world without compromising on their faith. This incorrect portrayal of muslims should not fool muslims into believing that the vast majority of the Islamic nation fit into these two extreme categories. In fact, the vast majority are balanced muslims and those who possess an extreme mentality are the minority. A muslim who observes this should therefore not give up their modesty and compromise on their faith believing that everyone else is doing the same so it is therefore acceptable for them to do so to. Unfortunately, this incorrect belief has already infected many muslims who use this poor excuse to take part in major sins, such as backbiting. This is an extremely immature attitude which fails to justify one's actions in a worldly court how then can this excuse hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day?

A muslim should therefore, not be fooled and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from

His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and not follow the behaviour of what the entertainment industry shows them. If a muslim chooses misguidance then they should know for certain that claiming everyone else was also misguided will not save them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted. And if they remain steadfast on right guidance then the misguidance of others will not harm them in this world or in the next. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105:

*“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”*



## Worldly Status

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the death of a celebrity and their worldly achievements. It reminded me of a verse of the Holy Quran found in chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

*“Whatever you have will end, but what Allah has is lasting...”*

The death of this celebrity reminded me of the many famous people who have passed away in my lifetime and how they were so quickly forgotten by the world, especially the media. Some celebrities were always mentioned during their lifetime in the news but after their passing they were perhaps mentioned once in the year that followed. In addition, the very things they obtained in the material world, such as fame, fortune, authority and a high social status all passed away while they journeyed to the hereafter empty handed.

This news article also reminded me of the many celebrities who after reaching the top of their industry became depressed and even suicidal. One of the reasons this occurs is that when they reach the top of the mountain after sacrificing so much, such as their modesty, dignity and morals they do not find what they were looking for namely, contentment

and lasting happiness. When they assess their life they realise that returning to their previous and more pleasant lifestyle is not possible as the things they sacrificed have now moved on or faded away. For example, they might have severed a friendship with a good person as they advised them not to sacrifice their self-respect for the sake of fame. They now find themselves surrounded by people who only desire their company for the sake of the material world, such as wealth. This often leads to loneliness even though they are surrounded by a large entourage. Then they spiral out of control which leads to a huge mental breakdown.

The key thing to understand is that there is nothing wrong with pursuing worldly success as long as it is lawful. But one should not sacrifice the limits set by Islam, such as their modesty to achieve it. One should also prioritize the hereafter over the material world knowing that whatever worldly thing they obtain will eventually leave them during their life or at the time of their death. If they behave in the opposite manner they too, like the celebrities of this world, will be left empty handed in their grave and they will be forgotten by those who they left behind. So a muslim must fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and to people, while enjoying the material world within the limits of Islam.

## Things Go Up and Down

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a famous athlete whose undefeated streak had been broken. This incident is connected to Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3618. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every worldly thing which is raised high is eventually lowered by Allah, the Exalted.

This does not mean muslims should avoid the material world and trying to achieve success in it. Muslims should strive to obtain a worldly education and a lawful occupation as it helps one to avoid unlawful wealth and is required to fulfil one's responsibilities. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

*“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world...”*

This Hadith actually means that one should not make worldly success their number one priority and instead dedicate most of their efforts in preparing for the hereafter. No matter how much worldly success one gains eventually it will fade away. This fading will occur either when one is alive or their success will part from them when they pass away. Countless people have constructed great empires and achieved much worldly

success yet all of this achievement eventually faded away. How many people have had their name plastered across sky scrapers only for their name to be removed and forgotten after a short while?

This Hadith does not mean that a person will not be given success after facing trouble. Muslims should strive to achieve success in the world and not quit when they face setbacks. The key is to prioritize the success of the hereafter over the material world by using the blessings and success of the material world to achieve success in the hereafter. One can achieve this by striving for lawful worldly success in order to fulfil their responsibilities and duties without waste and extravagance. They should also utilise their worldly success to aid them further in preparing for the hereafter by spending their extra wealth in charitable projects. If their worldly success can influence society then they should use this in a way which benefits others. A muslim should behave in this manner before their worldly success fades away and they lose out on using it to achieve good in the hereafter.

Simply put, success in the material world will pass away but the success of the hereafter will endure therefore muslims should dedicate their efforts accordingly.

## **How to Gain Trust in Allah, the Exalted**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different aspects of the universe, such as the Sun, planets and other things. At one point in history Earth seemed to be the only significant thing in the universe. But with the passing of time and scientific advancements it was discovered that Earth is in fact only a drop in a vast ocean namely, the universe. It is important for muslims to understand these scientific teachings as it inspires one to adopt good characteristics, such as trust in the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. When a muslim faces difficulties and questions the help of Allah, the Exalted, they should ponder over the size of the universe and how many creatures exist in it. The Earth is a single planet in a solar system which is made up of many planets and a star. Many solar systems make up a galaxy. Many galaxies make up the universe. A muslim firmly believes that all these things were created and are sustained by Allah, the Exalted, without any partner or help. When a muslim reflects on this deeply they should realise that if Allah, the Exalted, can sustain the entire universe without anything being deprived or falling out of sync He can also take care of their issues and difficulties.

Provision is something people often stress about and in some cases this stress even drives them to seek provision from unlawful sources. Whenever a muslim faces this stress they should reflect on the universe and on the countless creations which Allah, the Exalted, provides continuous provision for. If He does this why should one suspect He will not provide provision for a person who only needs a few things to sustain themselves? Taking a step back when facing difficulties and assessing these

facts is an excellent way to remove stress and strengthen one's trust in Allah, the Exalted.

Teachings are found in the Holy Quran and in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the promise of Allah, the Exalted, to provide continuous provision to the creation. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 60:

*“And how many a creature carries not its [own] provision. Allah provides for it and for you...”*

But the truth of these teachings is also found in the creation, such as the universe. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 190:

*“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.”*

Therefore, it is important for muslims to firstly learn and act on the teachings of the divine scriptures and then reflect on the creation. This will lead to the strengthening of one's faith, which includes the strengthening of one's trust in Allah, the Exalted.

## **Work Hard in the World**

I saw a news report a while ago which will be briefly discussed. It reported on a successful non-muslim businessman. It discussed how he struggled at the start of his business and how many years of effort, stress and sacrifice led to a successful multi-million pound business. It reminded me of a verse of the Holy Quran which declares that Allah, the Exalted, never wastes the efforts of people. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 115:

*“...Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”*

This verse provides hope that as long as one strives to do something lawful and beneficial their efforts will not be wasted. If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people who do not even believe in Him why would He not support the muslims who believe in His Oneness and Lordship? If Allah, the Exalted, does not waste the efforts of people when they strive for the material world how can He then waste the efforts of those who strive to achieve good in the hereafter?

People should therefore, never give up striving to achieve good in both this world and in the next. Unfortunately, some muslims have given up struggling to earn a lawful income after facing some hardship. They instead opt to receive social benefits and become a burden on society. Those who

are rightly entitled to receive benefits should continue to utilise them as it is their right. But those who have the ability to earn for themselves should do so.

This verse also encourages muslims to continue doing good to others even if they do not appreciate their efforts. If one acts with sincerity meaning, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they should be confident their efforts have been recorded and will be rewarded in both worlds.

To conclude, whatever lawful action a muslim performs whether its worldly, such as a business opportunity, or whether they perform a religious deed they should put full effort into it knowing that Allah, the Exalted, will support them and grant them success, sooner or later.



## **Reducing Evil Influences**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the positive and negative influence of society and culture. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3294, advises that whichever path the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, took the Devil would take a different path, meaning, out of fear of him. One of the reasons why the Devil acted in this way was because he had little influence over Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. The Devil cannot physically force someone to commit sins. He instead encourages them to do so through whisperings. But in order for them to be effective he requires a person to possess some sort of worldly desire. Then through his whisperings he encourages the growth of this worldly desire until it drives the person to act on it thereby committing a sin. The reason the Devil had little effect on Umar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, was because he had removed worldly desires from his heart. His only desires were connected to pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, if muslims desire to minimise the effect the Devil has on them they should remove unnecessary desires from their heart. This only occurs when one refrains from indulging in the excess and unnecessary aspects of this material world. The more they do this the more these worldly desires will leave their heart until they reach a point where they only desire to please Allah, the Exalted, in all their actions. The Devil will flee from this person as he knows he will have little effect on them. But the more one indulges in the unnecessary aspects of this material world the more worldly desires they will possess and therefore, the more influence the Devil will have over them.

## **A Prophetic Evening**

I read a news article a while ago which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the night-life culture found in different societies. A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 701, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked sleeping before performing the late evening obligatory prayer and disliked engaging in conversation after performing it.

Even though, it is not prohibited to sleep before the late evening obligatory prayer it is far better and safer to offer it first as sleeping before it could cause one to sleep pass its time. In addition, even if one manages to wake up the laziness caused by sleep may prevent them from fully concentrating it thereby, reducing their reward. Finally, it is best to offer it and all the rest of the obligatory prayers as soon as they happen as this is one of the most beloved righteous deeds to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 612. And behaving in this manner is a sign of a true believer. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

*“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”*

Unfortunately, it has become a widely practiced custom especially, amongst Asian muslims, to hold worldly gatherings and conversations after

they have performed the obligatory late evening prayer. Even though, this is not prohibited yet, it often leads to vain speech which is a waste of time which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. It often leads to sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering. And even if one is protected from this staying up in the evening unnecessarily will only make them more tired thereby making it harder for them to wake up and perform the obligatory dawn prayer correctly. This fatigue is often the reason why many muslims do not offer the obligatory dawn prayer at the Mosque with congregation. This fatigue can also prevent one from offering the night voluntary prayer which is the best prayer after the obligatory prayers according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614. And the voluntary night prayer is a firmly established tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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