

Concern for Others

PodSeries - Vol 33



Achieve Noble Character

Concern for Others

ShaykhPod Books

Published by ShaykhPod Books, 2023

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First edition. May 2, 2023.

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Acknowledgements

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

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

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

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

This book will discuss an important aspect of Noble Character namely, genuine concern for others.

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.

Concern for Others

One of the major reasons people face difficulties is due to their lack of concern for others. Islam teaches that a person can only become successful after they demonstrate genuine concern for others. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. One only needs to review the pages of history to conclude that every nation which rose to its peak did so because the members of the society showed genuine concern for the wellbeing of others. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the righteous predecessors did not let a moment pass without helping others as they knew this was the path to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The concern for others has many avenues including emotional, financial and physical help. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6022. So no one can declare they are not in a position to adopt this pious characteristic.

Those who believe Allah, the Exalted, is pleased with them as long as they complete their physical acts of worship are mistaken. Aiding and supporting others is an important duty on all Muslims and therefore must be fulfilled in order to achieve the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This is the reason the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly commanded mankind to be good to others, such as their relatives. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.”

But this verse does not mean that people should only be concerned about themselves and their relatives. In reality, even animals possess this innate behaviour. For example, when their young are incapable of hunting for food they provide food for them. And once they mature they teach them how to fend for themselves also. Humans are meant to be the best of creation therefore they should rise beyond the level of animals and show concern for others beyond their own relatives. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4217, that one can only be a true believer when they desire for others what they wish for themselves.

Unfortunately, some have fallen so low they behave worse than animals as they do not even show concern for their own children. They pay no attention towards the company their children keep. They are heedless to their education, both Islamic and worldly. Instead, they dump their children into schools and Mosques and expect these institutions to raise their children for them.

Aiding others is the reason Islam stresses the importance of all forms of charity. This concept not only includes wealth but physical and emotional

support also. Those that discourage aiding others have been rebuked in the Holy Quran. Therefore, muslims should avoid this ignorant behaviour and instead fulfill this duty whenever and wherever they can. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verse 3:

“And does not encourage the feeding of the poor.”

The misguided have also been described as those who refuse to donate useful things. This extends to all things not just wealth. When muslims refuse to aid others then the concept of Islam breaks down. This causes the destitute to fall deeper into their poverty while the rich continue enjoying their luxuries heedlessly. This behaviour prevents awareness and support for one another whereas the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, informed mankind in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, that the muslim community is like one body. If one part becomes ill then the rest of the body shares in the pain. Some have become oblivious to the suffering of others and therefore defy these fundamental teachings of Islam.

When individuals stop caring about the rest of society then the environment becomes like a jungle. This causes the value of human life to become worthless. It is this attitude that results in the deaths of innocent people.

Unfortunately, some not only fail to guide themselves and show genuine concern for others but they purposely set out to cause conflict amongst others. These are one of the worse groups of people as they do not find peace until they take it away from others. The same way they ruined their own relationships they desire others to suffer with them. These are the human Devils who work hand in hand with the Devil to spread corruption. They make it their mission to uncover the faults of others. They forget the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930, which advises that when one covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults in this world and in the next. People should not behave like the gossip tabloids and spread the faults of others as this will cause Allah, the Exalted, to expose their faults. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880. One should first look in the mirror and recognize that they too make mistakes and therefore should excuse others. People do not appreciate when another exposes their faults therefore they should not expose the faults of others. If Allah, the Exalted, does not expose people's faults then why do they? Allah, the Exalted, knows the inner thoughts of people and still does not expose them whereas people only observe the actions of each other and still expose them. Allah, the Exalted, forgives people so muslims should adopt this trait and remember that whoever forgives others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

An important branch of having concern for others is offering good advice meaning, gently commanding good and forbidding evil. As advised by the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196, Islam is about advising one another.

Abandoning advising others can lead to divine punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2169, that if muslims stop commanding good and forbidding evil then Allah, the Exalted, will punish everyone. Even when the best of them supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, He will not respond.

A rightly guided muslim will always participate in any type of good irrespective of who organizes or takes part in it. Unfortunately, the attitude of some is the opposite of this. Out of jealousy they despise others who strive to do good within the society. They not only refuse to take part in the good task but try their best to hinder its outcome. They mistakenly believe that if the task is achieved then the status of the organizer will become higher than theirs which is unacceptable to them. They fail to understand the simple philosophy that if people within a community are hindered from achieving good then this will impact the other members of the community in a negative way. Whereas, if the task is achieved it will benefit everyone including the misguided. For example, when a group of muslims desire to build a Mosque some try to hinder its construction. But they fail to understand that if the task is achieved it will help the education of their own relatives. This education will affect the community as a whole such as, reducing crime. People must stop assessing who is performing a good task and instead participate any way they can.

Muslims often become confused whenever the members of their community including the pious are punished along with the rest of the society. They fail to realize that a muslim cannot be pious until they show concern for others. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave an example of this mentality in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, by discussing two groups of people who occupied two decks on a large boat. Those in the bottom deck needed to go past the people in the upper deck in order to retrieve water. As this disturbed the people of the upper deck those on the lower deck decided to save them this trouble by drilling a hole in the ship so that they could access the water directly. If the people of the upper deck failed to stop them then the whole boat would sink killing everyone. This Hadith reminds muslims that the sins others commit will eventually affect them if they fail to warn them to desist. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2169. Those who believe they are free from this duty as long as they purify their own soul are mistaken. A good quality apple will eventually become rotten if it is surrounded by rotten apples.

People should genuinely advise others as this may be the cause of their own salvation through the reward obtained for having concern for others. Even if one's advice has no effect on others they should still continue advising as every moment spent on this duty will be handsomely rewarded in this world and in the next by Allah, the Exalted. Persistent good advice is like continuous drops of water which can change the strongest of materials. So one should never give up advising as this is the path of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

One of the causes of a society regressing into immoral and animalistic practices is when the educated fail to command good and forbid evil. The

Holy Quran mentions how the scholars of the past nations failed to fulfill this important duty. Due to this Allah, the Exalted, destroyed them as well as those who habitually transgressed without repenting. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 79:

“They used not to prevent one another from wrongdoing that they did. How wretched was that which they were doing. “

Refraining from helping others is just like ignoring cancer which has affected a single organ of the body. If it is ignored and not treated it can spread until every organ is infected with cancer which then overcomes the person and causes their death. This is what occurs in a society when people fail to perform this important duty.

A spiritual illness which has affected society is that some are only concerned about helping the rich and influential seeking compensation from them instead of seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. They so easily abandon their own relatives once their social status changes. Some become like Pharaoh and believe others are insignificant. When people cherry-pick in this way their incorrect intention is revealed. Therefore, they should expect no reward from Allah, the Exalted, in this world or in the next.

Muslims should not be fooled into believing that the one who is engrossed in worship but possesses a bad character will achieve success. There are

numerous examples proving that both worship and the concern for others are required for success. If having genuine concern for animals has been stressed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, can one imagine how important it is to treat people kindly? This is further explained in the Holy Quran. Allah, the Exalted, declares that piety is not facing a specific direction during prayer but to believe in all aspects of Islam, worship Allah, the Exalted, and treat all people kindly through charity and other means. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakāh; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”

The important thing to note in this verse is that the only physical deed that is connected directly to Allah, the Exalted, is the prayer. The rest are all connected to Allah, the Exalted, via the creation. Therefore, if one desires to please Allah, the Exalted, then they must be good towards the creation. It is important to note, that this kindness must extend to all including non-muslims.

Sometimes people claim that their tongue is harsh but their spiritual heart is pure. This is incorrect as eventually what is on the inside is expressed outwardly. So if one possesses an impure spiritual heart then this will show on their tongue and actions. Similarly, if one possesses a pure spiritual heart then this will show in their words and actions. This is clearly explained in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984.

Some muslims spend their days in Mosques offering worship but fail to practically show concern for others. They incorrectly believe that Islam teaches this and because of their ignorance they might be punished in the next world. Muslims must strike a balance between worshipping Allah, the Exalted, and treating people kindly in all situations. One should never believe that others should not be treated kindly because of their faith, ethnicity, social status or gender as this concept completely challenges the teachings of Islam.

When a society continues to sincerely advise each other then it will benefit everyone. But when a society becomes adverse to mutual consultation it will only lead to suffering. Counseling each other also leads to increase in mutual affection which only leads to benefit. Some incorrectly believe that a person who possesses knowledge does not need to seek advice. If this was the case then why did the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consult the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them? Even though, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, knew the best path as he was divinely guided he still consulted with them in order to teach mankind that it always results in benefit. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“...and consult them in the matter...”

Sometimes consultation can be done in order to make someone feel included in the decision which strengthens the bonds between people. For example, a person contemplating marriage will ultimately decide who to wed. But if they consult their relatives beforehand it will enhance the love and respect they have for one another.

All these characteristics begin at home. When one acts in the correct way at home then it is reflected throughout society. A single normal person cannot alter a large scale situation but society can benefit when many come together in the way described.

A neighbour's rights are so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once believed that they would be included in a muslim's inheritance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6685. In another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 173, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly linked defective faith and treating a neighbour harshly. This single Hadith alone is enough to show the rights of a neighbour let alone the numerous verses and other Hadiths. One simply cannot be a successful believer if they do not show genuine concern for their neighbours. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 36:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side...”

Allah, the Exalted, created social divisions within the world so that people can gain reward by helping each other. The world continues moving forward because of these divisions otherwise trading would cease. If every person possessed everything they would not require anyone to aid them. People would thereby lose out on the potential reward. Allah, the Exalted, did not create these divisions so one looks down on another. One should never believe they are superior to others as this is the way of the Devil. If a person desires to surpass others they must adopt piety as this is the only classification set by Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3270. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...”

As mentioned earlier, part of having genuine concern for others is to advise others. It is important to understand that there are three types of criticism. The first type is for the sake of correcting and reforming others in a positive way namely, constructive criticism. The second type of criticism is done only for the sake of criticizing. This type of person dislikes others being praised so they criticize them just to reduce their social status. They only

desire to achieve fame and respect within the society so they pick random targets to criticize. Their criticism is not constructive as they provide no other useful alternatives to the person or idea they are opposing. The last group of people only criticize as they desire controversy and tribulation within society. The first type is welcomed in Islam and encouraged as it involves improving the characters of others.

One should always aim to please others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if it is with a few simple words of encouragement. Unfortunately, some have adopted the opposite characteristic. No doubt one should always adhere to the truth but there is a difference between commanding good and lending one's shoulder for another to lean on. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, that the one who is requested for advice has been given a trust and therefore must fulfill it correctly by gently commanding good and forbidding evil. Fulfilling this duty in the correct way ensures that the grief stricken is provided with hope and emotional comfort. This is the very reason why people visit the family of a deceased. The aim is to share in the family's sorrow and encourage them towards patience.

The following Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2390, should be enough to demonstrate the importance of showing concern for others. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those muslims who loved each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be given pulpits of light on Judgment Day.

The major reason why muslims will enter Paradise or Hell will be due to the way they interacted with society. This is because when a muslim commits a sin that is between them and Allah, the Exalted, there is always hope of forgiveness as Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely merciful. But when a person commits a sin against another person Allah, the Exalted, will only forgive the sinner after the victim forgives first. As the creation is not so merciful the victim may well take retribution from their oppressor on the Day of Judgment by taking their good deeds and if necessary unload their sins onto them. This process may very well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, if a muslim fulfilled their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and showed genuine concern for others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, they will gain Paradise. But if they treat others in an evil manner then there is a good chance they will enter Hell.

The aim of social interaction in Islam is to aid each other in beneficial matters pertaining to faith and this material world. If someone desires to sincerely advise another they should do so according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with a soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

The concern for the creation is so important that many questions will be asked on the Day of Judgment regarding this duty. For example, the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6556, that Allah, the Exalted, will ask a muslim on Judgment Day why they did not feed Him when He was hungry. The person will reply shockingly that how can Allah, the Exalted, be hungry when He is the Lord of the worlds. Allah, the Exalted, will reply that once another person was hungry but they did not feed them when they had an opportunity to do so. Allah, the Exalted, will add that if the muslim fed the hungry person then they would have found the mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

The world has been created in such a way that when people mistreat others a day always comes when society mistreats them meaning, what goes around comes around. One of the most obvious forms this can be seen in is when people mistreat their parents. When this occurs it is only a matter of time until their own children mistreat them in the same way. For example, a son may turn his back on his parents for the sake of love. But because of this disrespect Allah, the Exalted, ensures that the son experiences the same pain and anguish as his parents felt through his own children. Conversely, if people show genuine concern of others through their actions then society will show concern for them.

Being pleased at the misfortune of others contradicts having concern for others and is one of the reasons why people face hardship. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2506. If a person refuses to physically or emotionally help a fellow human being who is facing hardship then the least they can do is not become pleased over their situation. Falling this low is worse than the level of animals as countless incidences have occurred where animals have aided one another and in certain cases aided human beings when they were in trouble. When one

falls below the level of animals then they lose the status of being the best of creation. This only leads to the loss of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which causes darkness to encompass one's spiritual heart and life.

Muslims must never forget the high status bestowed on them by Allah, the Exalted. They need to fulfill the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4217, which warns that one cannot become a successful muslim until they desire for others what they wish for themselves. If they desire peace and security for themselves then they should wish this for others and aid them to achieve it according to their means.

Remembering and mentioning the faults of others contradicts having genuine concern for others. Unfortunately, countless people have fallen for this trap of the Devil which inspires them to never forget the mistakes of others even though they themselves may have committed more mistakes and sins. They dislike when a sinful person like themselves changes for the better. As a result they strive to inform others of the mistakes and sins committed by the repentant. This misguided person attempts to dishonor the repentant but their actions only cause Allah, the Exalted, to dishonor them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2505. One only needs to review their own life in order to see examples of such misguided people. Allah, the Exalted, has promised to erase the sins of those who sincerely repent. Therefore, people should not discuss the sins and mistakes of others. Muslims should concentrate on their own sins and strive to sincerely repent and change for the better. They should not waste time observing the sins and mistakes of others as this is not their duty nor any of their business. If they had genuine concern for others they would

conceal their faults hoping that Allah, the Exalted, will conceal their faults. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225.

As mentioned in earlier concern for others includes gently commanding good and forbidding evil. Unfortunately, due to a lack of knowledge many perform this important duty incorrectly. Instead of bringing others closer to Allah, the Exalted, they only drive them away. Certain etiquettes must be fulfilled in order to perform this duty correctly. For example, one should never use this as a means to degrade someone as some often do. A muslim should avoid persistently badgering others over undesirable actions that are not classified as sins. Those who do this only inspire others to harbor enmity for them. In addition, one should always try to avoid making a specific person a target of criticism. Instead they should adopt the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who constructively criticized in a general way without naming names. An example of this is recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2017. Finally, One should try to advise people in private. Many people are pushed further away from Allah, the Exalted, because they are publicly shamed.

True piety can only be obtained when one shows sincere concern and advises the people around them. The duty of a muslim includes creating awareness within the society. Undoubtedly, the control of destiny is out of the hands of the creation meaning, whether someone will have a positive impact on society or not but Allah, the Exalted, has given strength and free will to people. Therefore, they need to use these to advise others the best way they can. Allah, the Exalted, expects people to struggle for what is right regardless of the outcome.

The concern for others is a very important branch of faith that some fail to act on. These heedless people fail to recognize that everyone will be questioned about the people in their lives and whether or not they showed genuine concern for them. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1705, everyone is a shepherd and will be questioned about their flock. This flock includes anyone who is connected to the person. For example, a husband will be questioned about his wife and children. If having concern for others was not important then why was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so anxious for the welfare of others? Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 128:

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you [i.e., your guidance] and to the believers is kind and merciful.”

This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so those who claim to love him must prove this love by following in his footsteps. Part of the reason why the righteous predecessors were so blessed is that they showed genuine concern for others. Only when one adopts concern for others in all aspects of their life can they truly begin to transverse the path of success which leads to the gates of Paradise.

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