

Prophetic Advice on Noble Character

PodHadith – Complete Series



Achieve Noble Character

Prophetic Advice on Noble Character

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Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following is a short commentary on some of the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss some good characteristics Muslims must adopt and some bad characteristics they must avoid in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind.

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 Judgement Day will be Noble Character. It is one of the 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.

Prophetic Advice on Noble Character

Sincerity

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards: Allah, the Exalted, His book, meaning, the Holy Quran, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the leaders of society and to the general public.

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

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

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

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

An aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, is to trust that His decrees and choices are best for the people involved, even if the wisdoms behind His decrees are not obvious to people. 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 only be pleased with the decrees that suit one's desires and become upset at the decrees which contradict one's desires is clear insincerity to Allah, the Exalted. The one who maintains sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through every situation and state is truly the sincere one.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342. An aspect of being sincere to the Holy Quran is to approach it with the sincere intention of understanding and acting on all of it, irrespective if one's desires are contradicted by the Holy Quran. The one who cheery picks which commands, prohibitions and advice to follow and ignore based on their whims has adopted insincerity towards it and they will not therefore, truly benefit from it's guidance. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words. It is an aspect of being sincere to him to respect, love and practically follow him. But this is not possible to do without learning about his blessed life and teachings. How can one respect, love and follow someone they do not even know? The one who claims to love and respect him but fails to practically follow him is insincere in their claim.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being sincere to the leaders of the community and includes showing sincerity to the religious leaders and teachers. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

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

This makes it clear that it is a duty to obey the leaders of society. But it is important to note, this obedience is a duty as long as one does not disobey Allah, the Exalted. There is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator. In cases like this, revolting against leaders should be avoided as it only leads to the harm of innocent people. Instead, the leaders should be gently advised good and forbidden evil according to the teachings of Islam. One should advise others to act accordingly and always supplicate for the leaders to remain on the correct path. If the leaders remain straight the general public will remain straight, also.

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society. There is no blind loyalty to leaders in Islam, only obedience to them in things which please Allah, the Exalted.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

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

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

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

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

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

An aspect of being sincere to others is aiding them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. One should not desire gratitude from people, as this destroys one's reward and is clear insincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Perfecting Islam

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim cannot make their Islam excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them.

This Hadith contains an all-encompassing advice which should be applied to every aspect of one's life. It includes a person's speech as well as their other physical actions. It means that a Muslim who desires to perfect their faith must avoid those things, through speech and actions, which do not concern them. And instead they must occupy themselves with those things that do. One should take the things that concern them very seriously and strive to fulfil the responsibilities which accompany them, according to the teachings of Islam, solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that one would not be perfecting their faith if they avoided things according to their own thinking or desires. But the one who perfects their faith avoids the things which Islam has advised to avoid. Meaning, one should strive to fulfil all their duties, avoid all sins and the things which are disliked in Islam and even avoid the excess use of unnecessary lawful things. Achieving this excellence is a characteristic of the excellence of faith mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This is when one acts and worships Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Him or they at least become fully aware of Allah, the Exalted, observing their every thought and action. Being aware of this divine surveillance will encourage a muslim to always abstain from sins and hasten towards righteous deeds. The one who does not avoid the things which do not concern them will not reach this level of excellence.

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them. Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

“No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.”

In fact, uttering words which are not a person's concern will be the main reason people enter Hell. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2412, that all speech will be counted against a person unless it is connected to advising good, forbidding evil or the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. This means that all other forms of speech are not a person's concern as they will not benefit them. It is important to note, that advising good encompasses anything which is beneficial in one's worldly and religious life, such as their occupation.

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themselves with the things which do concern them will not find time to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Finally, the one who occupies themselves with the things which concern them will complete all the useful worldly and religious things they are responsible for and therefore obtain peace of mind. One of the main sources of stress is when one occupies themselves with things which do not concern them, as it prevents them from fulfilling their worldly and religious responsibilities. Behaving in the right manner will allow one to complete their important responsibilities while ensuring they have plenty of free time to relax and do the things they enjoy.

Controlling Anger

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful such as, in self-defense. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, something demonstrated perfectly by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience.

This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themselves in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah,

the Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“...who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.”

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themselves until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely, heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with. In addition, hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. The root of hatred is anger. This makes it clear that Islam does not command one to abolish anger, as this is not really possible to achieve, it instead teaches them to control it within the bounds of Islam.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one's desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

Being Steadfast

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Finally, it involves fulfilling these aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one performs good deeds other than for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times and refraining from cherry picking when and what Islamic teachings one will follow according to their desires.

Steadfastness includes sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know that neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need

anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast in their faith.
Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

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

As indicated by this verse, an aspect of being steadfast is obeying anyone whose commands and advice is rooted in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness..."

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their spiritual heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs, one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people, if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Love for Others

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, that a person cannot become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This does not mean a muslim will lose their faith if they fail to adopt this characteristic. It means that a muslim's faith will not be complete until they act on this advice. This Hadith also indicates that a muslim will not perfect their faith until they also dislike for others what they dislike for themselves. This is supported by another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. It advises that the muslim nation is like one body. If one part of the body is in pain the rest of the body shares the pain. This mutual feeling includes loving and hating for others what one loves and hates for themselves.

A muslim can only achieve this status when their heart is free from evil traits, such as envy. These evil traits will always cause one to desire better for themselves. So in reality, this Hadith is an indication that one should purify their heart by adopting good characteristics, such as being forgiving, and eliminate evil traits, such as envy. This is only possible through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important for muslims to understand that desiring good for others will not cause them to lose out on good things. The treasury of Allah, the Exalted, has no limits so there is no need to adopt a selfish and greedy mentality.

Desiring good for others includes striving to aid others in anyway one can, such as financial or emotional support, in the same way a person would desire others to aid them in their moment of need. Therefore, this love must be shown through actions not just words. Even when a muslim forbids evil and offers advice, which contradicts the desire of others, they should do so gently just like they would want others to advise them kindly.

As mentioned earlier, the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of eliminating all bad characteristics which contradict mutual love and care, such as envy. Envy is when a person desires to possess a specific blessing which is only obtainable when it is taken away from someone else. This attitude is a direct challenge to the distribution of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is a major sin and leads to the destruction of the envier's good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903. If a Muslim must desire the lawful things others possess they should wish and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, to grant them the same or similar thing without the other person losing their blessing. This type of jealousy is lawful and is praiseworthy in aspects of religion. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that muslims should only be jealous of a wealthy person who uses their wealth correctly. And be jealous of a knowledgeable person who uses their knowledge to benefit themselves and others.

A Muslim should not only love for others to obtain lawful worldly blessings but also for them to gain religious blessings in both worlds. In fact, when one wishes this for others it encourages them to strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type of healthy competition is welcomed in Islam. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 26:

“...So for this let the competitors compete.”

This encouragement will also inspire a muslim to assess themselves in order to find and eliminate any faults in their character. When these two elements combine meaning, striving in sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and purifying one's character, it leads to success in both worlds.

A Muslim must therefore not only claim to love for others what they desire for themselves verbally but show it through their actions. It is hoped that the one who is concerned for others in this way will receive the concern of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930.

Comprehensive Advice

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that purity is half of faith.

Faith can be split into two halves. The first half consists of performing righteous deeds while the second half involves refraining from sins. The purity mentioned in this Hadith could be referring to the second half, meaning, purification from sins through sincere repentance. This involves feeling remorse over one's sins, asking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted and people. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect but instead they need to turn back to Allah, the Exalted, in sincere repentance whenever they slip up and sin.

In addition, the Holy Quran has used the word faith to mean the prayer in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“...And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]...”

If the Hadith refers to the prayer then this could mean that half of the prayer is purity namely, ablution.

Finally, purity could also be referring to the purity of one's spiritual heart, through abandoning negative characteristics and adopting good ones by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam. This inner purification leads to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These two halves are the ingredients of faith and success. Therefore, this inner purification is half of faith.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that prayer is a light. This could mean that the one who establishes the prayer, by fulfilling all its conditions and etiquettes correctly, will be guided by the light of the prayer towards the sincere 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. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

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

In addition, the prayer will be a light in a muslim's grave. This is the moment when their wealth and family abandons them and they are left with only their good and bad deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. The one who establishes their prayers will find that it enlightens their grave and provides them comfort in their moment of need and loneliness.

The prayer will also be a light for a muslim on the Day of Judgment. Through this light they will be guided correctly from one terrifying stage to another until they reach the gates of Paradise safely.

The purpose of light is to illuminate things. The prayer illuminates and reminds a Muslim of their purpose on this Earth, namely, practically preparing for the Day of Judgement. This is why the five daily obligatory prayers are spread throughout the day. Therefore, the purpose of a Muslim is constantly illuminated through the light of their prayers so that they remain vigilant at all times. In addition, when one fulfills their five obligatory prayers at a Mosque with congregation, then the light of their prayers leads them towards the House of Allah, the Exalted, in this world just like the light of their prayers will lead them to the court of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. The one who is lead on Judgement Day in this manner will succeed. Chapter 19 Maryam, verse 85:

"On the Day We will gather the righteous to the Most Merciful as a delegation."

The next thing advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that charity is a proof. This could mean charity given for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is a proof of one's faith. To give up one's beloved wealth for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a proof of their faith and belief that it pleases Him and that they will be rewarded for it in both worlds. Those who do not give charity will have no such proof on the

Day of Judgment to present to Allah, the Exalted, in order to support their claim of faith.

Charity is also proof of one's lack of greed for worldly things. The one who refrains from giving charity does so out of greed for the worldly things they possess. A Muslim must understand that the blessings gained from giving charity for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, far outweigh the worldly blessings they possess. For example, the peace granted to a charitable person cannot be obtained by hoarding onto worldly things, even if they own the entire world. This is obvious, as the people who are the richest are often the ones who lack peace in their lives.

Charity is also proof of one's sincerity to others, which is a duty in Islam according to many teachings within Islam, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196. The one who is charitable with their resources, such as their time and energy, proves their sincerity to others, as long as they help others for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted.

Charity is also proof of one being a true believer. According to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13, a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. The same way a person desires help, such as financial, physical and emotional help, in their moment of need, they must love this for others also. And this must be shown through one's actions and speech.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that patience is a radiant light. Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. Patience is a radiant light as it guides a muslim to fulfilling these aspects correctly.

In addition, patience illuminates the right path and course of action in moments of difficulties, so that one can correctly determine how to behave in every difficulty they encounter while gaining an uncountable reward in both worlds. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the Holy Quran is either evidence for or against someone. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

This means that the one who fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran will find that it testifies in their favour on Judgment Day. These aspects involve correctly and regularly reciting the Holy Quran, understanding

the Holy Quran and finally, sincerely acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran. But those who fail to fulfil these aspects correctly will find that the Holy Quran testifies against them on Judgment Day. In fact, those who fail to understand and act on the Holy Quran only harm themselves even though they believe they are receiving reward. For example, a muslim might recite chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1, but as they themselves backbite and slander others they are only invoking the curse of Allah, the Exalted, on themselves.

“Woe to every backbiter and slanderer.”

The last thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is how the behaviour of a person either leads them to freedom or it condemns them. This means that the muslim who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their responsibilities to Him and to people, according to the teachings of Islam, will free themselves from punishment. Whereas, those who fail to do this only condemn themselves to punishment in both worlds. Chapter 91 Ash Shams, verses 9-10:

“He has succeeded who purifies it. And he has failed who instils it [with corruption].”

The one who acts correctly, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will find freedom from difficulties and stress. 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."

Whereas, the one who fails to use the blessings they were granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will condemn themselves to a dark and constricted life in both worlds, even if they fulfill all their worldly desires. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Excellence of Faith

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of excellence of faith. This excellence refers to one's conduct and behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Acting with excellence has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as chapter 10 Yunus, verse 26:

“For them who have done excellent is the best [reward] - and extra...”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has explained this verse in Hadiths found in Sahih Muslim, numbers 449 and 450. The word extra in this verse refers to when the inhabitants of Paradise will be blessed with the divine vision of Allah, the Exalted. This reward befits the muslim who acts with excellence as excellence means to lead one's life as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted, observing their outer and inner being at all times. A person who can observe a powerful authority watching them will never misbehave out of awe of them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised someone to always behave as if they were constantly being observed by a righteous man they respected. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 5539. Whoever acts in this manner will very rarely commit sins and always hasten towards good deeds. This attitude creates the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and acts as a shield from the fire of trials in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter. This vigilance will ensure one not only fulfills all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, but it also encourages them to fulfill their responsibilities towards the creation. The peak of which is to

sincerely treat others with kindness. This person will fulfill the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 251, which advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

This level of excellence ensures one acts with the right intention, which is the foundation of faith, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Success is guaranteed for the one who performs good deeds and demonstrates good behavior with the right intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted. The more excellent a person acts, the stronger their faith becomes until they become a muslim who is far from heedlessness and is always struggling to beautify their hereafter and worldly life according to the teachings of Islam.

It is feared that the opposite of this reward will be given to those who turned away from Allah, the Exalted. As they lived without fearing the all-encompassing gaze of Allah, the Exalted, they will be veiled from seeing Him in the hereafter. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 15:

“No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be partitioned.”

Those who fail to reach the level of acting as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, must act on the second part of the advice given in the main Hadith under discussion, namely, to sincerely believe that Allah, the Exalted, is constantly observing them. Even though this state is lower in rank than the one who acts as if they observe Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it is a great way of adopting true fear of Allah, the Exalted. As

mentioned earlier, this attitude will prevent one from committing sins and encourage them towards good deeds. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Imam Tabarani's, Al Mu'jam Al Kabir, number 7935, the one who strives to adopt this mentality will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

The divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is mentioned throughout the Holy Quran, such as Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

"...He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised to adopt the true awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, in many Hadiths. For example, in one divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with whoever remembers Him. This is the reason why it has been reported in Hilyat Al Awliya, volume 1, pages 84 and 85, about the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he shied away from the glitter and pomp of the material world and found solace in the lonely night. Meaning, he sought the companionship of Allah, the Exalted, rather than the companionship of people.

Adopting the awareness of the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, not only prevents sins and encourages good deeds but it also prevents loneliness and depression. A person is very rarely affected by mental

health issues when they are constantly surrounded by a person who loves them and aids them. No one loves the creation more than Allah, the Exalted, and there is no doubt that He is the source of all aid. Therefore, acting with excellence benefits one's faith, actions, emotional state and the wider society.

A muslim must avoid becoming like those who treat Allah, the Exalted, as the most insignificant of those who observe them. This is a serious spiritual illness which leads to all types of sins and evil behavior towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The one who acts on the lower level by constantly remembering the divine vision will eventually reach the higher level and live as if they can see Allah, the Exalted, constantly observing their outer and inner states. Living in this manner ensures steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all cases.

Both levels of excellence of faith is obtained when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge. The more they do this, the more they will be aware of the divine presence. Remaining steadfast on this behaviour will then lead to excellence of faith.

How to Live

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to live in this world as a stranger or a traveller. And Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to advise that when a person reaches the evening they should not expect to be alive in the morning. And if they reach the morning they should not expect to be alive in the evening. And that a muslim must make use of their good health before they encounter sickness and make good use of their life before their death.

This Hadith teaches muslims to limit their hopes for a long life. Hopes for a long life is the main cause of failing to prepare for the hereafter as it encourages one to dedicate their complete effort to the material world, as they are convinced they have plenty of time to prepare for the hereafter.

A muslim should not treat this temporary world as their permanent home. Instead, they should behave as someone who is about to depart it, never to return. This would inspire one to dedicate the majority of their efforts in preparing for their final destination namely, the hereafter, and to limit their efforts in obtaining the material world which is beyond their need and responsibilities. This concept has been discussed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for example chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 39:

“...this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.”

In a similar Hadith to the main one under discussion, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described himself in this world as a rider who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then swiftly moves on. In order to indicate the temporal nature of this world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compared it to shade which, as everyone knows, does not last long even though it appears to be permanent. This is how the material world can appear to some. They behave as if the world will last forever whereas in reality it will quickly fade away.

In addition, this Hadith mentions a rider and not someone who is walking. This is because a rider would rest significantly less than someone journeying on foot. This further indicates that a person's stay in this world is very short. This is quite evident to all. Even those who reach elderly age admit their life went by in a flash. So in reality, whether one reaches old age or not, life is just a moment. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day...”

In reality, the material world is like a bridge which must be crossed and not taken as a permanent home. The same way a person does not take a bus station as their home knowing their stay there will only be for a short while similarly, the world is a short stop before one reaches the eternal hereafter.

When someone goes on a once in a lifetime holiday, in most cases, they will limit their spending on luxury household items, such as a wide screen television, and instead make do with whatever services their hotel offers. They behave in this manner as they understand that their stay in the hotel will be short and soon they will leave, never to return. This mentality prevents them from taking the holiday destination as their permanent home. Similarly, people were sent to Earth for a purpose which is definitely not to make it their permanent home. Instead, they were sent to take provisions from it so that they can safely reach their permanent home meaning, the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him.

Whenever a person intends to travel they first acquire the provision they need in order to make the journey comfortable and successful. As indicated in the Holy Quran the best provision for the hereafter is piety. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“...indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah...”

This is when a muslim fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according

to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. Other provisions, such as food, are required in order to complete the journey from the world to the hereafter. But the provision which should be prioritised is piety as it is the only provision which will benefit someone in both this world and the next. It leads to peace in this world and in the next. 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."

As the material world is not the permanent home of a person they should therefore act on the main Hadith under discussion and either live as if they were a stranger or a traveller.

The first state of being a stranger is someone who does not attach their heart and mind to their temporary home. Their only aim is to gather enough supplies so that they can return safely to their permanent home namely, the hereafter. This is like the one who lives in a foreign country on a work visa. Their place of work is not their home; only a place to earn money so that they can return back to their homeland with it. This person will never treat the strange country as their home. Instead, they will only spend on necessary things and concentrate on saving their wealth so that they can take as much wealth as possible back to their real and permanent home. If this person spent all or the majority of their wealth in the foreign country and returned to their home country empty handed they would undoubtedly be considered blameworthy by their

relatives. This is because they have failed in their mission and purpose of living in another country on a work visa. Similarly, a muslim should dedicate the majority of their efforts in acquiring provisions to take to the hereafter. They should not compete for the luxuries of the material world with others. Instead, they must concentrate on their mission to acquire provisions for the eternal hereafter. If they dedicate too much effort in beautifying their temporary home then they will enter the hereafter unprepared and empty handed and therefore, fail in their mission which Allah, the Exalted, entrusted them with. A muslim should be honest with themselves and reflect on how many hours of the day they dedicate to the material world and preparing for the hereafter. This self-reflection will show them if they have the correct mentality or not and how strong their faith in the hereafter really is. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

“But you prefer the worldly life. While the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent to mankind when they were the most lowly of people and the vast majority of them were leading a sinful life which would have caused them to enter Hell. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, called them towards the path of truth with clear proofs. Many of these people accepted his clear message and followed him. He promised them that Islam would conquer many nations and much wealth would be obtained by the muslims. But he warned them not to become distracted by the luxuries of the material world. An example of this warning is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that competing for the unnecessary luxuries of the material world would destroy people. Therefore, he advised muslims to content themselves with the basic necessities in order to fulfil their responsibilities and needs and instead concentrate on preparing for the

hereafter. Everything the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised muslims came true. When the world was opened to the muslims the majority of them became busy with competing, collecting, hoarding and enjoying the excess of the material world. Thus, they gave up preparing for the hereafter correctly as they were told to by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only a few accepted his advice and only took what they needed from the material world in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities and dedicated the majority of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter. This small party, meaning the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors, caught up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter, as they practically followed his advice and footsteps. On the other hand, the majority continued in their heedlessness chasing the material world until death caught them unprepared.

The second mentality muslims should adopt as advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that of a traveller. This person does not observe this material world as their home and instead journeys towards their true home meaning, the hereafter. This mentality is similar to a back packer who may sleep over in different cities but never regards them as their home. The only provision they take with them is what they can carry meaning, the essentials. This includes the things they need to survive and will help them reach their destination safely. A back packer would never pack unnecessary items knowing that these things will only be a burden for them. Nor will they fail to pack the essentials needed to complete their journey safely. Similarly, an intelligent muslim only collects the deeds from this material world, in respect to actions and speech, which will help them reach the hereafter safely. They will turn away from all actions and speech which will become a burden for them in both this world and the next. This is the attitude the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4104. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground.”

A muslim must understand that the day and night are only brief stages in which people travel through, stage by stage, until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, they should use each stage by sending ahead provision to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds. They must constantly be aware that their journey will end very soon and they will reach the hereafter. Even if the journey looks long it will ultimately feel like a moment so one should make it a moment of obedience before it ends while they are unprepared. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day...”

With every breath one takes, they are moving towards the hereafter while leaving the world behind. Even though, one may seem not to be moving but in reality, the day and night act as their conveyance which takes them swiftly, without pause, to the next world.

Muslims must realise that as they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, soon a day will come when they will return to Him. When they return they will be stopped for questioning. Therefore, they should prepare

something good for this interrogation. They should prepare by using the blessings they were granted in this world in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But if they continue in heedlessness and fail to prepare, then they will be taken to task for what has already occurred and for what remains.

Moving on to the advice of the Companion, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. The first part of it highlights the importance of shortening one's hope for a long life in this world. A muslim should not believe their stay in this world is long, as they could pass away at any moment. Even if one lives for many years, life still seems to have gone by in a flash. This is what Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated by advising muslims not to believe they will be alive in the morning if they reach the evening. This mentality is the root cause of only taking what one needs from the material world in order to fulfil their worldly responsibilities and prepare for the hereafter. Whereas, having hopes for a long life is the root cause of the opposite meaning, it causes one to delay preparing for the hereafter by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins and it encourages them to collect and hoard the material world, believing their stay in it will be extremely long.

In addition, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised muslims to make good use of their good health before they encounter sickness. Unfortunately, most people only appreciate the value of good health after they lose it, which has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Making use of good health means that a muslim should use their physical and mental strength in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins before they reach a time when they might desire to perform good deeds but can no longer do them due to poor health. The one who makes good use of their good health will be given the reward of

the righteous deeds they performed during their good health, even when they encounter sickness and can no longer do them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2996. Whereas, the one who does not make good use of their good health will lose this potential reward when they become sick. In fact, they will be left with nothing except regret.

The final part of the advice given by Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, is that a person should make good use of their life before death. This includes making use of all things which lead to righteous deeds, such as wealth, and avoiding all those things which prevent one from doing good deeds, such as unnecessary preoccupations. It is important for muslims to make good use of their time before they become distracted with responsibilities which naturally occur with the passing of time, such as marriage. And to make good use of their wealth before their financial responsibilities increase. Making good use of time is essential for success as it is a strange worldly blessing, which never returns after it departs, unlike all other blessings. One must make use of their time by prioritising their activities correctly according to the teachings of Islam. The one who behaves in this manner will fulfill all their responsibilities, duties and necessities and have plenty of time to enjoy lawful pleasures in a balanced way.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2403, all people will have regrets at the time of their death. The good doer will regret that they did not perform more good deeds before dying. The sinful person will regret that they did not sincerely repent before their death. In this world people are often given second chances for example, redoing a driving test, but there is no do over once a person dies. Regret will not help them at all. Instead, it will only add to their pain and suffering. So muslims must use the time they are given to strive in the obedience of

Allah, the Exalted, before their moment ends by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should abandon the mentality of delaying things till tomorrow, as in most cases this tomorrow never comes. A muslim should concentrate on today and therefore, do the things which please Allah, the Exalted, as tomorrow may come in this world but they may not be alive to witness it.

Righteous Actions

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some key pieces of advice. The first is that whoever relieves the distress of a muslim, Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

This shows that a muslim is treated by Allah, the Exalted, in the same way they act. There are many examples of this within the teachings of Islam. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted.

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another, whether worldly or religious, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who gives a drink to a thirsty muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world, this reward is held back for a muslim until they reach the hereafter. This also indicates that a Muslim should always be more concerned with the hardships of Judgement Day over the hardships of this world. One must always remember that the hardships of this world will always be temporary, less severe and less far reaching than the hardships of the hereafter. This understanding will ensure they strive hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in order to avoid the hardships of the hereafter.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that whoever conceals the faults of a muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known

to others, it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

“Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to overlook the mistakes of those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4375.

The second type of person is the wicked one who commits sins openly and does not care about people finding out about them. In fact, they often boast about the sins they have committed to others. As they inspire others to act in an evil way, exposing their faults in order to warn others does not contradict this Hadith. Nor will this person have their faults exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in return for exposing the faults of this wicked person, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, as long as they are exposing the faults of another for the correct reason.

It is important to act on this part of the main Hadith under discussion, as the humiliation of being exposed on Judgement Day, in front of the entire creation, is beyond imagination. So a person should not fool themselves into believing that as being exposed in this world is bearable for them, they will also be able to bear being exposed on Judgement Day.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, will continue helping a muslim as long as they are helping others. A muslim must understand that when they strive for something or are aided by another person to complete a particular task the outcome may be successful or end in failure. But when Allah, the Exalted, helps someone with anything, a successful outcome is guaranteed. It is important to note that this divine aid is obtained when one aids others in both religious and lawful worldly matters. In addition, a Muslim must help others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, if they desire this reward. This means they should not expect, hope nor ask for any signs of gratitude from who they are aiding.

Muslims should therefore, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of

them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it is easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it. The knowledge mentioned includes useful worldly knowledge as well as religious knowledge, as the former often aids one to remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted. For example, the one who seeks useful worldly knowledge in order to obtain a lawful occupation will find it easier to avoid earning unlawful wealth. This attitude will aid them in their journey towards Paradise.

In addition, the path of Paradise is only journeyed by those who adopt piety. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions, facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of piety is therefore gaining and acting on religious knowledge. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

But the important thing to note is that a muslim's intention to seek and act on knowledge must be to please Allah, the Exalted. Whoever seeks religious knowledge for a worldly reason, such as showing off, has been warned of Hell, if they fail to sincerely repent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253.

In addition, a muslim must strive to act on their knowledge as knowledge without action is of no value or benefit. This is like the one who possesses knowledge of a path to safety but does not take it and instead remains in an area full of dangers. This is why knowledge can be split into two categories. The first is when one acts on their knowledge, which leads to piety and an increase in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The second is when one fails to act on their knowledge. This type will not increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in fact, it will only increase them in arrogance believing they are superior to others even though they are like donkeys which carry books that do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion are the blessings obtained by a group of muslims who study and recite the Holy Quran in a Mosque. Namely, tranquillity and mercy will descend upon them, the Angels will surround them and Allah, the Exalted, will mention them to the Heavenly Angels.

This indicates the virtue of learning and studying the Holy Quran. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5027, that the best person is the one who learns the Holy Quran and teaches it to others. It is important to note, this includes acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran. This group of people are so special that Allah, the Exalted, will even forgive the person who unintentionally joins them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6408. It is hoped that those

who perform this deed regularly will be granted the gifts mentioned earlier namely, tranquility and the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day. Whoever receives these blessings will find peace and ease in all aspects of their life and when they encounter a difficulty these gifts will safely guide them through it.

It is hoped that whoever receives the company of the Angels in this world will be granted their company at the time of their death and in the hereafter. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 31:

“We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and [are so] in the Hereafter...”

The next reward coincides with a reality which is mentioned throughout Islamic teachings. What a person gives is what they shall receive. As they remember Allah, the Exalted, with the people on Earth. Allah, the Exalted, remembers them with the Angels in the Heavens. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

The muslim who adopts the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, through their speech and actions, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways please to Allah, the Exalted, will be granted peace and a light

which guides them through every difficulty until they reach the hereafter and the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, successfully. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that one's lineage will not benefit them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds. Allah, the Exalted, bestows mercy and ranks to people in the hereafter according to their righteous deeds. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 132:

"And for all are degrees [i.e., positions resulting] from what they have done..."

A muslim should therefore not be fooled into believing their lineage will save them from punishment. If anything, a person who has a pious muslim in their lineage should strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, so that they reach their level and live up to the name and status Allah, the Exalted, granted them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted the highest station in both worlds yet, he still strived so hard in worship that his feet became swollen. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7124. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 519, that only Allah, the Exalted, and the righteous believers are his friends

and are close to him. He did not give superiority to lineage and neither should muslims.

Islam is a religion of equality and therefore all will be treated and judged by Allah, the Exalted, in this world and in the next according to their intention and efforts, all other things, such as gender, lineage and brotherhoods have no value. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

Objecting to Evil

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it, is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present and silent when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a muslim who has the strength to do so, for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has

been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates themselves and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse. It instead refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes, even though they have nothing to fear if they speak against the evil which is occurring.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. 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...”

But it is important to note, a muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed...do not spy...”

It is important to note, that a muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A muslim may believe they are acting for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A muslim must object to evil in a gentle way, preferably in private according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is not possible to achieve without learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering

others. Finally, one must object to evil at the right time, as constructively criticising someone at the wrong time, such as when they are angry, is unlikely to be effective in positively influencing them.

Levels of Remembrance

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

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

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. This involves speaking in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or remaining silent. As this has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, remaining silent in cases when someone has nothing good to say, is a good deed and is therefore part of remembering Allah, the Exalted.

The highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This

is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who does this will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But this requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

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

The one who fulfils all three levels has been promised peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"...Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And 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."

Unfortunately, many Muslims who fulfill their obligatory duties and perform voluntary worship overlook and fail to fulfil these levels of remembering Allah, the Exalted, and as a result they fail to find peace in this world, despite their worship and good deeds.

Prayers Lead to Paradise

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise.

The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn and late afternoon obligatory prayers (Fajr and Asr), as during these two times the weather is cooler than at other times meaning, before sunrise and before sunset.

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes correctly according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as offering them on time. In fact, offering them as soon as they occur is one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252.

Even though, there are five obligatory prayers which must be established yet, only two have been mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. This is because these two prayers are arguably the two hardest to establish. The obligatory dawn prayer occurs at a time when most people are asleep. Therefore, it requires much energy and motivation in order to leave one's comfortable bed in order to offer it correctly. The obligatory late afternoon prayer mostly occurs at a time where most people have completed their working day and have returned home tired. So to leave one's relaxation after a tiring and even stressful

day of work in order to correctly offer their obligatory prayer is difficult. Therefore, if one correctly establishes these two prayers they will, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers, which usually occur at more convenient times.

Muslims should therefore strive to establish all their obligatory prayers as it is the very essence of Islam and it in fact separates belief from disbelief. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618.

Finally, one must note that the main Hadith under discussion does not mean one can achieve success by only offering the five obligatory prayers while neglecting their other obligatory duties and responsibilities to Allah, the Exalted, and people. In reality, the one who establishes their obligatory prayers will strive to fulfill all their other obligatory duties and responsibilities, as this is one of the outcomes of establishing the obligatory prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing..."

In addition, the Hadith guarantees Paradise to the one who establishes their obligatory prayers but does not guarantee that they will not enter Hell first as a result of their sins. Therefore, as always, one must understand the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths in their correct context.

Gaining Reward

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who perform deeds for the sake of people, such as showing off, instead of doing them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, will be told to gain their reward on Judgment Day from the people they acted for which in reality is not possible to do.

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds, and even Islam itself, is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

A muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter, as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their

children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others, such as their children, and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 110:

"...So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone."

Pure Spending

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

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

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

according to the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, which is beyond comprehension. But the one who holds back will miss out on this great reward.

In addition, the main Hadith also includes using one's other lawful worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as aiding others emotionally and physically. As long as one aids others in what is good for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and they do not seek gratitude or praise from people, they will receive an uncountable reward.

Fulfill Your Half

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, allocated all things, such as provision, to all creatures over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth.

It is important to understand that there are two aspects in respect to all situations, such as gaining one's provision. The first aspect is what Allah, the Exalted, has decided meaning, destiny; this will occur and nothing in creation can prevent this from occurring. As this is out of a person's hands, it makes no sense to stress over this aspect as they have no influence on destiny irrespective of what they or anybody else does. In addition, this provision includes the minimum a person needs to survive in this world. Meaning, as long as they are alive, a person will continue to receive their provision and nothing can stop them from receiving and utilising it, not even themselves.

The second aspect is one's own efforts. This aspect a person has full control over and they should therefore concentrate on this aspect by using the means they have been provided such as their physical strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, which they have no control over, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to gain lawful provision in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents while avoiding the unlawful, excess, waste and extravagance.

To conclude, a muslim should never waste time stressing over things they have no control or influence over. Instead, they should use the means they possess and act on those things which they have control over according to the teachings of Islam. A Muslim must avoid adopting an extreme mentality by either adopting laziness and relying on destiny to deliver their provision to them nor should they rely completely on their own efforts. The balance is to strive to earn lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and rely on the guarantee of Allah, the Exalted, as this reliance will prevent impatience and seeking wealth through unlawful means. This is what Allah, the Exalted, has commanded.

One Body

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body suffers pain the rest of the body shares in its pain.

This Hadith, like many others, indicates the importance of not becoming so self-absorbed into one's own life thereby behaving as if the universe revolves around them and their problems. The Devil inspires a muslim to focus so much on their own life and their problems that they lose focus on the bigger picture which leads to impatience and causes them to become heedless of others and as a result they fail their duty in supporting others according to their means. A muslim should always bear this in mind and strive to aid others as much as they can. This extends beyond financial help and includes all verbal and physical help, such as good and sincere advice.

Muslims should regularly observe the news and those who are in difficult situations all over the world. This will inspire them to avoid becoming self-centered and self-absorbed and instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of unity and equality in Islam, as one must aid other muslims according to their means, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or anything else.

The same way a person desires to remove their own distress, they must strive to behave in this manner for others, as the main Hadith clearly indicates that for a Muslim there is no difference between them facing a distress or another Muslim facing a distress. It is one in the same.

Finally, even though a muslim cannot remove all the problems of the world but they can play their part and help others according to their means as this is what Allah, the Exalted, commands and expects.

Guiding Others

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who guides others to something good will receive the same reward as those who act on their advice. And those who guide others to sins, will be held accountable as if they committed the sins.

It is important for muslims to be careful when advising and guiding others. A muslim should only advise others in matters of good so that they gain reward from it and avoid advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. A person will not escape punishment on Judgment Day by simply claiming they were only inviting others towards sins even if they did not commit the sins themselves. Allah, the Exalted, will hold both the guide and the follower accountable for their actions. Muslims should therefore only advise others to do the things they would do themselves. If they dislike an action being recorded in their book of deeds they should not advise others to perform that action.

Because of this Islamic principle muslims should ensure they gain the adequate knowledge before advising others as they can easily multiply their own sins if they incorrectly advise others.

In addition, this principle is an extremely easy way for muslims to gain reward for actions they cannot perform themselves due to a lack of means, such as wealth. For example, a person who is not financially

able to donate charity can encourage others to do so and this will result in them gaining the same reward as the one who gave charity.

In addition, this Islamic principle is an excellent way to ensure the growth of one's good deeds even after they die. The more one guides others to what is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more their good deeds will increase. This is the legacy a Muslim must concern themselves with, as all other legacies, such as property empires, will come and go, and they will not benefit them after they die. If anything, they will be held accountable for earning and hoarding their empire while their inheritors enjoy the empire the deceased left behind.

Reasons for Marriage

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser.

It is important to understand that the first three things mentioned in this Hadith are very transient and imperfect. They may give someone temporary happiness but ultimately these things will become a burden for them as they are linked to the material world and not to the thing which grants ultimate and permanent success namely, faith. One only needs to observe the rich and famous in order to understand that wealth does not bring happiness. In fact, the rich are the most unsatisfied and unhappy people on Earth. Marrying someone for the sake of their lineage is foolish as it does not guarantee the person will make a good spouse. In fact, if the marriage does not work out, it destroys the family bond the two families possessed before the marriage. Marrying only for the sake of beauty meaning, love, is not wise as this is a fickle emotion which changes with the passing of time and with one's mood. How many couples supposedly drowned in love ended up hating each other?

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor, as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse, as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and

ultimate quality a muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Put simply, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will treat their spouse well in both times of happiness and difficulty. On the other hand, those who are irreligious will mistreat their spouse whenever they are upset. This is one of the main reasons why domestic violence has increased amongst muslims in recent years. And even when they are pleased with their spouse, they will still fail to fulfil their rights because of their ignorance, which piety helps to remove. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

Finally, the pious person is always more concerned about fulfilling the rights of others, such as their spouse, then they are concerned about people fulfilling their rights. This is because they understand that Allah, the Exalted, will question them whether or not they fulfilled the rights of people. He will not ask them if people fulfilled their rights, as this will be dealt with when Allah, the Exalted, questions others, not when He questions them. Whereas, the impious Muslim will only ever care about their rights, rights that they have taken from society, culture, fashion and their imagination and not from Islam. As a result, they will never be truly pleased with their spouse, even if their spouse fulfills their rights according to the teachings of Islam. This is the reason why ignorance of Islam and divorces are so strongly linked.

Finally, if a muslim desires to get married they should firstly obtain the knowledge associated with it, such as the rights they owe their spouse, the rights they are owed from their spouse and how to correctly deal with one's spouse in different situations. Unfortunately, ignorance of this leads to many arguments and divorces as people demand things which their spouse is not obliged to fulfill. Therefore, knowledge, which is the root of piety, is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Equality

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6543, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge people based on their outward appearance or their wealth instead He observes and judges people's inward intention and their physical actions.

The first thing to note is that a muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, this Hadith indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is not superior to others by worldly things such as their ethnicity or wealth. Even though, many muslims have erected these barriers, such as social castes and sects, thereby believing some are better than others, Islam has clearly rejected this concept and declared that, in this respect, all people are equal in the sight of Islam. The only thing which makes one muslim superior to another is their piety meaning, how much they fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

In addition, the main Hadith under discussion also indicates that women should not waste their time debating and arguing about their position in the world in respect to men. Instead, they must understand that superiority does not lie in copying or outdoing men. It only lies in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

A muslim should therefore busy themselves in obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His rights and the rights of people and not believe that something they possess or belong to will somehow save them from punishment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, that the muslim who lacks in righteous deeds meaning, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will not be increased in rank because of their lineage. In reality, this applies to all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

Finally, as Islam judges people based on their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, so should people. They must not deem others inferior to them or others based on worldly standards, as this often leads to pride and failing in fulfilling the rights of others, both of which lead to disaster in both worlds.

The real status of a person is hidden, as one's intention is hidden from people, even if they can observe their actions. Therefore, it is foolish to look down upon others, as they may well be superior to them.

True Hope

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is when one controls their soul by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and actively struggles for preparing for the hereafter. Whereas, the foolish wishful thinker follows their desires and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

It is important for muslims not to confuse these two attitudes so that they avoid living and dying as a wishful thinker, as this person is highly unlikely to succeed in this world or the next. Wishful thinking is like a farmer who fails to prepare the land for planting, fails to plant seeds, fails to water the land and then expects to harvest a huge crop. This is plain foolishness and this farmer is highly unlikely to succeed. Whereas, true hope is like a farmer who prepares the land, plants seeds, waters the land and then hopes Allah, the Exalted, will bless them with a huge harvest. The key difference is that the one who possesses true hope will actively strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And whenever they slip up they sincerely repent. Whereas, the wishful thinker will not actively strive in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and instead follow their desires and still expect Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and fulfill their wishes.

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

A specific type of wishful thinking which affected the past nations and even the muslim nation is when a person believes that they can ignore the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and somehow someone on the Day of Judgement will intercede for them and save them from Hell. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less even with his intercession some muslims, whose punishment will be reduced by it, will still enter Hell. Even a single moment in Hell is truly unbearable. So one should abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope by practically striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The Devil convinces those who do not believe in Judgement Day that even if it occurs, they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on that day by claiming that they were not so bad as they avoided major crimes such as murder. They have convinced themselves that their pleas will be accepted and they will be sent to Paradise even though they disbelieved in Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. This is incredibly foolish as Allah, the Exalted, will not treat the person who believed in Him and tried to obey Him like the one who disbelieved in Him. A single verse has erased this type of wishful thinking. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

Finally, a Muslim should not adopt wishful thinking by believing that as they are a muslim, they will enter Paradise some day, even if they must enter Hell first, as a consequence of their sins. No one is guaranteed to leave this world with their faith. The one who abandons sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is in great danger of leaving this world without their faith. It is important to understand that faith is like a plant which must be nourished and taken care of, through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. When the plant of faith is neglected it may well die, leaving one with nothing to ensure their success in both worlds.

Two Parts of Success

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the bankrupt muslim is the one who accumulates many righteous deeds, such as fasting and prayer, but as they mistreated people their good deeds will be given to their victims and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them on Judgement Day. This will lead to them being hurled into Hell.

It is important to understand that a muslim must fulfil both aspects of faith in order to achieve success. The first are the duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer. The second aspect is to fulfill the rights of people, which includes treating them kindly. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true Muslim and believer until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from a person and their possessions, irrespective of the religion they follow.

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, is infinitely forgiving meaning, He will forgive those who sincerely repent to Him. But He will not forgive the sins which involve other people until the victim forgives first. As people are not so forgiving, a muslim should be fearful that those who they have wronged will exact revenge on them by taking away their precious good deeds on Judgment Day. Even if a muslim fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, they may still end up in Hell simply because they have wronged others.

It does not make sense to accumulate righteous deeds, such as prayers and fasts, only to hand them over to others on Judgement Day. One must instead strive to increase their righteous deeds and minimize their sins by fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, according to the teachings of Islam.

Increase or Loss

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

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents, without waste and extravagance, as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed, as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

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

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

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and use their blessings in the correct way, as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication of the Angel will go against them. The destruction mentioned in the main Hadith does not necessarily refer to losing the blessing but includes the worldly blessing becoming a source of stress and difficulty for them in both worlds. This can be easily observed in those who fail to use their blessings correctly, such as their wealth. The very wealth they obtain and hoard hoping it will become a source of peace for them becomes the source of their stress and anxiety. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more in both worlds, which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Moderation in Worldly Matters

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim should be moderate when seeking worldly things as what is destined for them will surely reach them.

It is important to understand that Islam does not encourage muslims to completely abandon the material world, as it is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. How can one possibly reach the hereafter without crossing this bridge? Islam instead teaches muslims to take from this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excess, waste and extravagance and then dedicate their efforts in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important to remember that the things one will obtain in this world, such as their provision, have already been apportioned to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748.

As a person's provision is guaranteed and cannot increase or decrease, irrespective of their efforts, they should strive for it according to their

necessities and responsibilities, as striving for more will only lead to stress and they may not obtain what their desire. In addition, this excess striving will distract them from practically preparing for the hereafter. This in turn will only lead to further stress for them in both worlds. Whereas, obeying the main Hadith and striving moderately for one's provision, will ensure they receive their apportioned share with minimal stress, they fulfil their responsibilities and prepare adequately for the hereafter. This leads to peace and success in both worlds.

Good Worldly Blessings

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2141, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that wealth is not bad as long as the one who possesses it has piety. He added that good health was better than wealth and concluded that being cheerful is a blessing.

The muslim who possesses piety will always spend their wealth in the correct way namely, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. So for them it will become a blessing in both worlds. It is important to note, spending in the correct way goes beyond charity and includes all types of lawful useful spending which is void of excessiveness, wasting or extravagance, such as spending on one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

Piety is only achieved by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.
Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

This knowledge will ensure a Muslim understands how to use their wealth, and their other worldly blessings, correctly. They will understand that using these blessings correctly leads to peace and success in both worlds whereas misusing them leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. 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."

Even though this type of wealth is a great blessing but having good health whereby one fulfills all their practical duties to Allah, the Exalted, and the creation independently, is a greater blessing. This is obvious as the rich happily spend their wealth in order to remain healthy and avoid sickness. One should therefore make use of their good health by striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as offering their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation and by performing voluntary fasts, before a day comes when they lose their good health and are left with regrets.

Finally, it is important for muslims to adopt positive characteristics, such as cheerfulness, as this is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also helps to tackle the different difficulties and tests one will face during their life. The one who adopts a positive mindset will more easily be patient during these times. Whereas, those who adopt a general negative and pessimistic mentality will become more easily impatient and disobedient to Allah, the

Exalted, during times of difficulties. A muslim should regularly review the countless blessings they were granted in order to maintain a positive mindset. In addition, they must gain and act on Islamic knowledge, as this will encourage them to understand the reality that Allah, the Exalted, only decrees what is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Commanding Good & Forbidding Evil

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water, so they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge, in a gentle way. A muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be affected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless, one should never give up advising their dependents, such as their family, as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is also a duty on all muslims, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Commanding good and forbidding evil while ignorant and with bad manners will only push people further away from the truth and right guidance, which in turn will affect the whole community negatively.

Only when one commands good and forbids evil correctly will they be protected from the negative effects of society and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

But if they only care about themselves and ignore the actions of others, it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Balanced Diet

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of a balanced diet. He advised that one should split their stomach into three parts. The first part is for food, the second part is for drink and the last part should be left empty for breathing.

This diet plan can be achieved when one stops eating before they reach their fill. This was the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

If people were to act on this advice they would be safe from both physical and mental illnesses. In fact, according to many knowledgeable people one of the main causes of illness is indigestion.

In respect to the spiritual heart, little food leads to a soft heart, humility of self and weakness of desires and anger. A full stomach results in laziness which prevents worship and other righteous deeds. It induces sleep which causes one to miss out on the voluntary and even the obligatory night prayers. It prevents reflection which is the key to assessing one's deeds and therefore changing one's character for the better. The one with a full stomach forgets the poor and is therefore less likely to help them. All these negative effects lead to a hard spiritual

heart. The one who possesses a hard spiritual heart will not be safe on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one who is only concerned about their stomach becomes distracted from more important things, such as learning and acting on religious knowledge. They become so preoccupied with gaining, preparing and eating different types of foods that it consumes a large portion of their time, energy and money. This attitude also prevents one from eating simple foods, which are easier and less time consuming to prepare and cheaper to buy. Extravagance in food also encourages one to become extravagant in other things, such as one's clothes and housing. This attitude in turn encourages one to earn more wealth in order to satisfy their extravagant lifestyle. This distracts them further from learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they can achieve peace and success in both worlds. It can also encourage them towards the unlawful in order to satisfy their extravagant lifestyle.

Muslims should know that the most fed in this world will be the hungriest on the Day of Judgment. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2478.

Therefore, muslims should strive to obtain a balanced diet so that they avoid the negative effects discussed which will undoubtedly hinder their success in both this world and the next.

Blessed in All Situations

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

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

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

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

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

It is important to note that success in every situation, in the main Hadith, has been indicated for the believer and not the Muslim. This is because a believer possesses stronger faith which is rooted in Islamic knowledge. As a result of their stronger faith, they adhere more strictly to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Whereas, the Muslim is someone who has accepted Islam but due to weak faith, which is caused by ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they may well fail to respond to different situations with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they reach the rank of a believer and therefore maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

Obtaining Good

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good, He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many muslims incorrectly believe that the good they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career, this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note, a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many muslims do not place much value in this. They, in most cases, only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more, such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts to worldly things, believing true good is found there. Many muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today, one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips.

A Muslim must not be fooled into believing that Islamic knowledge only explains how to perform rituals and what is unlawful and lawful. In reality, it teaches people how to adopt the correct attitude and behaviour so that they use all the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds thereby achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds. The only One who can teach this to mankind is the One who created and knows all things namely, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, prioritising gaining and acting on worldly knowledge over religious knowledge is not wise.

Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it. This in turn will lead to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Prioritising Correctly

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

This half of the Hadith means that whoever correctly fulfils their duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation, such as providing for their family in a lawful manner while avoiding the excess of this material world, will be granted contentment. This is when one is pleased with what they possess without being greedy and actively striving to obtain more worldly things. In reality, the one who is content with what they possess is a truly rich person, even if they possess little wealth, as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

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

Prioritising preparing for the hereafter means that one should always act and speak in a way which will benefit them in the hereafter. As explained earlier, this includes striving for one's lawful provision in order to fulfill their necessities and responsibilities without being wasteful or extravagant. Any activity which will not benefit one in the hereafter should be minimized. The more one behaves in this manner the more contentment they will be blessed with and the easier their day to day activities will become. In addition, they will adequately prepare for the hereafter also, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they achieve peace and success in both worlds.

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

If Only

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some important things. The first is that the strong believer is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than a weaker believer.

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength, which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people correctly and in every situation, during ease and difficulties, according to their knowledge. Whereas, a weak believer will easily fail in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people in difficult situations.

In addition, the faith of the weak believer is based on blind imitation of others, and not Islamic knowledge. Blind imitation prevents one from improving their behaviour through gaining new knowledge and it often leads to deviant practices, especially when the person one imitates is ignorant themselves. Blind imitation does not suffice when one faces difficult situations, which require steadfastness, which in itself is rooted in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who does not possess Islamic knowledge easily questions and challenges destiny.

The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of 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. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. 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...”

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person should strive to obtain the things which benefit them without giving up. This means they should actively strive in order to obtain what Islam defines as good for themselves in both worlds, in a lawful manner as prescribed by Islam. One must note that true benefit in this world, as defined by Islam, will always benefit one in the hereafter. If it does not, then it is not true benefit. One should not be lazy and expect good things to happen spontaneously, as this is wishful thinking. They should use the energy and resources they have been provided in order to seek this good and then hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, for a good outcome. This part of the main Hadith is linked to the first part, as a person cannot understand what real good is in this world without gaining Islamic knowledge. Put simply, real good lies in using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to peace and success in both worlds. If anything prevents one from doing this, then it is not good at all, even if society, fashion and culture says otherwise.

The final part of the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims not to question destiny, as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages

muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdoms behind it because of their short sightedness and lack of understanding. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it was in fact bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient, as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. 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 part of the main Hadith is again connected to the first part, as both knowledge and strong faith will prevent one from questioning destiny, as they firmly believe that the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, are best for everyone involved and are unavoidable. Therefore, showing impatience will not prevent destiny from occurring and it will instead only lead to a loss of reward and peace in both worlds.

Sainthood

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares some important things. The first thing mentioned is that Allah, the Exalted, declares war on the person who shows enmity to one of His righteous friends.

This occurs as the one who shows enmity to a person's friend is in fact showing enmity to the person indirectly. This indirectly warns muslims to only befriend the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, and to never show any enmity or dislike for them, as this is the attitude of the enemies of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Devil. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 1:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies...”

It is important to note, that any form of disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is waging war against Him. Therefore, a muslim should avoid all forms of disobedience, including disliking those who strive in obeying Him, as this only invites the anger of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, that a person should never insult his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as insulting them is like insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, and whoever harms him, has insulted Allah, the Exalted. And this sinful person will soon be punished, unless they sincerely repent.

In addition, as righteousness, which is based on one's intention, is hidden from people, Muslims must avoid disliking other Muslims, as they do not know who is a righteous friend of Allah, the Exalted. So this part of the main Hadith encourages one to show good manners to all Muslims, by treating them in a way one wishes to be treated by people.

The next thing mentioned in the main divine Hadith under discussion is that a muslim can only draw close to Allah, the Exalted, through fulfilling their obligatory duties. And they can achieve the love of Allah, the Exalted, through voluntary righteous deeds.

This description splits the servants of Allah, the Exalted, into two categories. The first group draws near to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayer, and in respect to people, such as the obligatory charity. This can be summed up by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny.

The second category of those who are brought near to Allah, the Exalted, are superior to the first group as they not only fulfil their obligatory duties but strive in voluntary righteous deeds. This clearly shows that this is the only path to the proximity of Allah, the Exalted. Whoever takes a path other than this will not achieve this vital goal. This

completely rejects the concept of obtaining sainthood without striving in obedience to Allah, the Exalted. The person who claims this is simply a liar. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is pure the rest of the body becomes pure. This leads to righteous deeds. So if a person does not perform righteous deeds, such as their obligatory duties, then their body is impure which means their spiritual heart is impure as well. This person can never reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, the greatest voluntary righteous deeds one can perform are those based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anyone who chooses to perform voluntary righteous deeds not based on his traditions has been fooled by the Devil, as no path will take one close to Allah, the Exalted, except the path and actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins....””

The pious muslims who belong in the second higher group are also those who avoid the unnecessary and vain things of this material world. This attitude aids them in focusing their efforts on performing voluntary righteous deeds. It is this group who have perfected their faith by loving, hating, giving and withholding all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

In addition, the Muslims from this higher group strive to use each blessing they have been granted, such as their energy and time, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They avoid using them in ways which will not please Allah, the Exalted, nor benefit them in the hereafter, even if these ways are permissible.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds, Allah, the Exalted, blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

It is important to note that this empowerment includes dealing with difficulties with patience and times of ease with gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This empowerment also includes obtaining peace of mind, as the mental state of the one who is empowered will not be easily shaken nor broken down by the different situations one can face in this world.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim's supplication will be fulfilled and they will be granted the refuge and protection of Allah, the Exalted. This is a clear lesson for those who desire lawful worldly things. They should not seek to obtain them using any means except through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. No spiritual teacher or anyone else will be able to grant things to a person unless the person strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and they are destined to obtain those things. In addition, no person can and will grant another refuge and protection from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. One can only obtain this protection through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This eliminates the wishful thinking of some who believe they can persist in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and still obtain protection from His punishment, especially in the hereafter, through the intercession of someone else. Even though, the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgement Day is a fact, none the less behaving in this mocking manner may cause one to lose it.

To conclude this Hadith makes it clear that the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, is only gained through His sincere obedience, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other prescribed

methods are false and nothing but wishful thinking, which has no value or weight in Islam.

The Truth

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The proof of one's sincerity is when they do not desire nor hope for the gratitude of others.

The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a muslim discusses something which does not concern them. This also includes avoiding vain speech, as it often leads to sinful speech and is a waste of one's precious time, which will be a regret for them on Judgement Day. One can adopt this level of truthfulness by simply saying something good or remaining silent.

The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to the hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions. The one who behaves in this manner will use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. According to the three levels discussed earlier, lying in one's intention involves being insincere to Allah, the Exalted, and performing good deeds for the sake of people. Lying in speech involves all types of sinful speech. Lying in actions includes persisting on sins, which involves violating the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who encompasses all these levels of lying is a great liar and it does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to the person on Judgement Day who is recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Truly Rich

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

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth. Meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter and no real benefit in this world. Or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds. Or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day, as they did not use their blessings, such as their wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This poverty will lead to a difficult accountability, stress, regrets and even punishment.

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

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

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

The truly rich person is the one who uses their blessings, such as their wealth, correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. 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."

In reality, this person takes their blessings with them to the hereafter. This attitude also provides them with free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds, which in turn, only increases their richness in the hereafter.

Finally, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, has demonstrated gratitude to Him. This will lead to an increase in blessings for them in both worlds. This is the correct definition of richness. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

Sublime Character

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The essence of this is learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The main Hadith also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly by people, they must also treat others with good character.

In addition, a person cannot be a true believer and Muslim until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions irrespective of their faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3318, that a woman will enter Hell because she mistreated a cat which led to its death. And another Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550, advises that a man was forgiven because he fed a thirsty dog. If this is the outcome of showing good character and the consequences of showing evil character to animals can one imagine the importance of showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people? In fact, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising that the one who possesses good character will be rewarded like the muslim who persistently worships Allah, the Exalted, and regularly fasts.

Finally, according to the main Hadith, if good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgement Day in favour of a person then this means that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgement Day against a person will be bad character. Bad character towards Allah, the Exalted, by failing to sincerely obey Him, and towards the creation, by failing to treat them how one desires to be treated by others.

Fear for the Nation

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that he did not fear poverty for the muslim nation. Instead, he feared that the worldly blessings would become easy to obtain and plentiful for them. This would cause them to compete for it and in turn, this would lead to their destruction, as this same competition destroyed the previous nations.

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things beyond their needs, even if they are lawful, it will distract them from practically preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It will lead them to bad character, such as being wasteful and extravagant, and may even take them towards sins, in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. Competing for worldly blessings with others, will lead them to adopting other negative characteristics, such as envy, spite and enmity, which leads to disunity, insincerity and failing to fulfil the rights of others. This competition may even cause one to harm others. This only leads to destruction in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to a person in this world.

It is obvious these worldly desires have taken control over many muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order

to obtain worldly blessings, such as wealth, or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this, then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter, as it may cause them to violate the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. The more one pursues their worldly desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter, as a person can either use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or according to their own desires. This will lead to the destruction warned in the main Hadith under discussion. A destruction which begins with stress and anxiety in this world and leads to extreme difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Salvation

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which in turn, will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects, two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little, as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds, which inspires one to perform

more righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Speaking too much will cause one to get involved in things which do not concern them. This always leads to trouble for oneself and others, such as fractured and broken relationships. In addition, the one who fails to avoid the things which do not concern them will not make their Islam excellent. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317. Salvation lies in striving to make one's faith excellent.

Speaking too much also leads to regular arguments and disagreements, which only causes stress for the speaker and others. Whereas, avoiding vain and evil speech will prevent this thereby ensuring the person obtains peace.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues, such as death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

Shade of a Tree

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2377, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that he was not concerned over the excess of this material world and his example in this world is of a rider, who takes a short rest under the shade of a tree and then leaves it behind by moving on.

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls, and to where they are heading, which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice, which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is, they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking, as the one who is walking would rest more under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need, just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will result in them obtaining peace and success in both worlds. 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."

As mentioned in the main Hadith, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not concerned about the unnecessary aspects of this world, a Muslim must also adopt this attitude, as the more one dedicates their energy and time to gaining and enjoying the unnecessary things of this world, the less time and energy they will have to use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted. This distraction will lead to nothing but stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

One should note that this discussion does not mean one should abandon this world, as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their efforts and time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

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

The Shade of Allah, the Exalted

In a long Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6806, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned seven groups of people who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgment by Allah, the Exalted.

This shade will protect them from the horrors of the Day of Judgment which includes the unbearable heat caused by the Sun being brought within two miles of the creation. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421.

The first person who will be granted shade is the just ruler. This in fact includes every muslim who strives to fulfil their duties as a ruler and shepherd over their dependents, such as their children. This is the one who strives to fulfil all the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people especially to those under their care. It includes those muslims who have no dependents as each person is a ruler over their own body and worldly blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, such as wealth. So when one rules over their body by using each organ and limb according to the teachings of Islam and utilizes each blessing they possess in a way pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they too are counted as a just ruler. The one who acts justly always aims to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it leads to the displeasure of people and their inner Devil. In reality, the just muslim is the one who strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, their own rights and the rights of people.

The next person who will be granted shade by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day is a young person who was raised in the worship of Allah, the Exalted. This is a great deed as one's desire for worldly things and possessing the mental and physical strength to obtain them is greatest during one's youth. For example, it is common to observe the elderly regularly attending a Mosque but rare to observe a young person. So if they put their desires aside and strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, first, then their reward will be great.

It is important to note, this Hadith does not refer to a young person who is constantly worshipping Allah, the Exalted. It refers to the one who fulfils their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and their duties towards people. The one who behaves in such a manner will find plenty of time to do other lawful things. But this attitude is rarely observed in a young person as most muslims only appreciate the importance of fulfilling their duties when they get older. This is why it is extremely important for parents and elders to encourage their children from a young age to fulfil their duties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even advised parents in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, to encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers before they reach the age when they become obligatory on them. This preparation ensures they will fulfil their duties when they become binding on them. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of raising children muslims often overlook as they encourage their children on succeeding in worldly matters and delay their religious education. But by this time they become to set in their ways to act on the commands of Allah, the Exalted.

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the muslim whose heart is attached to the Mosques. This includes the

muslim who strives to offer their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation. One can understand the seriousness of not performing this deed by understanding the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1481. It warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to command the houses of the men who failed to offer their prayers in congregation at the Mosque without a valid excuse to be burned down.

In this day and age for a working muslim it is difficult to offer all their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation. But even still with the exception of a few every muslim can offer at least a few obligatory prayers in congregation at the Mosque every day. For example, those who work night shifts can offer the obligatory prayers which occur during the day. And those who work day shifts can offer the obligatory prayers which occur during the night with congregation at the Mosque.

This Hadith also includes those who regularly attend Mosques in order to teach or learn Islamic knowledge as this deed causes their hearts to keep returning to the Mosque.

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day are those who love other people for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means they interact, advise and help others only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. They prove their love through actions not just through their words. They never demand nor expect anything in return for what they do from people and only hope in reward from Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is the foundation of Islam as each muslim will be judged according to their intention, not just their deeds. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of

people will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Acting with sincerity not only earns countless reward in both worlds but it ensures one places their hope in Allah, the Exalted, instead of people. When one places hope in people they will eventually, sooner or later, be let down by them which leads to enmity, broken relationships, bitterness and other sins and negative characteristics.

Loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is a branch of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This is because controlling one's love is a very difficult thing to do. Whoever achieves this will find the other duties of Islam straight forward.

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is a person who is invited towards fornication but rejects it out of the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Controlling one's desire especially when no one except Allah, the Exalted, will know about it is a great deed. Muslims should strive to avoid situations where they might be invited to sins by firstly avoiding places where sins are more common, such as a nightclub. This is extremely important as a person's environment often has a deep impact on their attitude and behaviour. Just like a student is more likely to study in a quiet library compared to a busy and loud house a muslim is less likely to be attracted to sins when they avoid places where sins occur regularly and openly. The other important thing is to avoid people who openly commit sins and invite others to them. A person will adopt the characteristics of their companions whether good or bad. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud,

number 4833. Muslims should not only ensure they accompany good people but also encourage their dependents, such as their children, to do the same. If muslims truly concentrated on this it will dramatically reduce the amount of youth who become involved in gangs and crime. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

The next person who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the person who donates secret charity. Even though donating charity publically can invite and encourage others to do the same, which increases one's reward depending on how many people follow their behaviour which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351, yet, donating charity in secret avoids the dangerous sin of showing off, which destroys one's deed. When a muslim donates in secret it indicates their sincerity to only please Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, this Hadith did not set a limit of how much charity must be donated. So a muslim has no excuse if they fail to act on this advice as Allah, the Exalted, observes the quality of a deed meaning, a person's sincerity, not quantity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

In addition, charity in Islam is not only restricted to donating wealth. In fact, it encompasses all good deeds, such as commanding good and forbidding evil. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim,

number 1671. As long as one of these righteous deeds is done in secret without the person mentioning it to others it is hoped they will fulfil this Hadith and be granted shade on Judgment Day.

The final person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion who will be granted shade on Judgment Day is the one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, in solitude and cries. Firstly, the fact that this reaction occurs in solitude indicates the sincerity of the muslim meaning, their reaction is purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This reaction could be due to a number of factors which include one's realisation of the uncountable blessings they have been granted even though they show a lack of gratitude for them by using them incorrectly. One's understanding of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when He conceals their sins from the creation. A muslim continuously receiving blessings from Allah, the Exalted, even when they sin. A muslim's reflection and assessment of their own deeds which encourages them to sincerely repent. One's realisation that they will only be forgiven and granted Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and not because of their righteous deeds, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6467. The important thing to note is that this reaction only occurs when one truly reflects on this material world, the afterlife, death, Judgment Day and their deeds. The one who is heedless to this will never achieve this outcome.

True Muslim and Believer

In a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the signs of a true muslim and a true believer. A true muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others. This in fact, includes all people irrespective of their faith. It includes all types of speech and actions which can cause harm or distress to another. This can include failing to give the best advice to others, as this contradicts sincerity towards others. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes advising others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, thereby, inviting them towards sins. A muslim should avoid this behavior as they will be held accountable for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This also includes not getting involved in other people's business, as this often leads to harming others. A Muslim must speak in a positive way in respect to others in their presence and absence, just like they desire other people to talk positively about them.

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

A true believer, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is the one who keeps their harm away from the lives and property of others. Again, this applies to all people irrespective of their faith. This includes stealing, misusing or damaging the property and belongings of others. Whenever one is entrusted with someone else's property, they must ensure they only use it with the owner's permission and in a way which

is pleasing and agreeable to the owner. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5421, that whoever illegally takes someone else's property, through a false oath, even if it is as small as a twig of a tree, will go to Hell.

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

Bad Character

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed three signs of a hypocrite. Even though a muslim will not lose their faith if they act on these characteristics yet it is vital to avoid them as a muslim who acts like a hypocrite may well end up with them on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031.

The first characteristic is that when they speak, they lie. Meaning, they lie often. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

Another popular lie people often speak believing it is not a sin is when they lie to children. This is undoubtedly a sin according to Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4991. It is plain foolishness to lie to children as they will only adopt this sinful habit from the elder who lies to them. Behaving in this manner shows children lying is acceptable when it is not acceptable according to the teachings of Islam. Only in very rare and extreme cases is lying acceptable for example, lying in order to protect the life of an innocent person.

It is vital to avoid lying as according to one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, it leads to other sins, such as backbiting and mocking people. This behaviour leads one to the gates of Hell. When a person continues to lie they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar. It does not take a scholar to predict what will happen to a person on Judgment day who has been recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a great liar.

All muslims desire the company of the Angels. Yet, when a person lies they are deprived of their company. In fact, the stench that is omitted from the mouth of a liar causes the Angels to move a mile away from them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1972.

The one who persists in lying will find that it infects their intention meaning, they begin to perform good deeds for other than to please Allah, the Exalted. This leads to a loss in reward in both worlds. In addition, it will also corrupt their actions, as physical sins become easier to do when one's tongue is addicted to lying.

The next characteristic of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith is that they betray their trusts. This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed and outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they gain further blessings, as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret, unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked amongst Muslims. One must treat the trusts between them and people in a way they desire others to treat the trusts that are between them.

In addition, these trusts include the people under one's care, such as dependents. A Muslim must strive to fulfill these trusts by fulfilling the rights of these people according to the teachings of Islam. For example, it is a duty on a parent to encourage their children to learn, understand and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The final sign of hypocrisy mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is breaking one's promises. The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which was agreed when one accepted Him as their Lord and God. This 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.

All other promises made with people must also be kept, unless one has a valid excuse especially, the ones a parent makes with children. Breaking promises only teaches children bad character and encourages them to believe being deceitful is an acceptable characteristic to possess. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2227, Allah, the Exalted, declares that He will be against the one who makes a promise in His name and then breaks it without a valid excuse. How can the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them on Judgment Day possibly succeed? It is always safer not to make promises with others where possible. But when a lawful promise is made, one must strive hard to fulfill it.

Trusting in Allah, the Exalted

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A muslim understands that the source of giving, withholding, harming or benefiting is none other than Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim truly believes that everything that occurs within their life, which Allah, the Exalted, alone decides, is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them and others. 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.”

It is important to note, that truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one should abandon using the means which Allah, the Exalted, has provided, such as medicine. As the main Hadith under discussion clearly mentions that the birds leave their nests actively searching for provision. When one uses the strength and means provided by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam, they are undoubtedly obeying and relying on Him. This is in fact, the outward element of trusting in Allah, the Exalted. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

“O you who have believed, take your precaution...”

In reality, the outward activity is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trusting Allah, the Exalted, inwardly is the inward state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One should not abandon the outward tradition even if they possess the inward state of trust.

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims to do so that they can obtain peace and

success in both worlds. Abandoning these actions while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant one peace and success is simply wishful thinking and has no value in Islam.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themselves is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same, as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people, then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was

over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith, might not seek provision actively, knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision, such as obtaining it through a job, is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents, even though they may be on this high rank.

Though it is important to note that using the means one has been granted, according to the teachings of Islam, is far better than abandoning them, as nothing is superior to the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for one, they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change, as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. 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, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted according to the teachings of Islam, firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person involved, whether they observe and realise this or not.

Obtaining Forgiveness

A divine Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3540, advises the importance and vastness of the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. The first part of the Hadith declares that as long as a muslim sincerely supplicates to Allah, the Exalted, and hope's in His mercy they will be forgiven by Him.

This response has in fact been guaranteed for all lawful supplications in the Holy Quran, not just for the supplication of forgiveness. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.”...”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned this verse and declared that supplication is an act of worship meaning, a righteous deed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1479. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, advises that every supplication is accepted in different ways as long as it is a lawful one. The person is either granted what they requested or a reward will be reserved for them in the hereafter or they will be forgiven an equivalent sin. But it is important to note, that in order to receive a positive response a muslim must fulfil the conditions and the etiquettes of the supplication. In respect to supplicating for forgiveness, this includes actively striving to avoid sins and sincerely obeying Allah,

the Exalted, as it contradicts common sense to ask for forgiveness while persisting on sins.

One of the greatest supplications a muslim can make is for forgiveness, as it is a means for one obtaining blessings, avoiding difficulties in this world and a means to obtaining Paradise and escaping Hell in the next world. Chapter 71 Nuh, verses 10-12:

“And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.’”

As indicated by the main Hadith under discussion having hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, when supplicating is a condition for forgiveness. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His servant's opinion of Him, which has been confirmed in a divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

One of the greatest causes of forgiveness is when a muslim only hopes in Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them, full well knowing no one can forgive them or protect them from punishment except Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that no matter how many sins a person commits the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is greater. In fact, it is unlimited, therefore a person's limited sins will never be able to overcome it. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to magnify what they supplicate for, as nothing is too great for Allah, the Exalted, to grant. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6812. But it is important to note that using the fact that the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite as an excuse to persist in sins, is only mocking this important truth and the one who behaves in such a manner may be deprived of His forgiveness.

The next part of the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of sincerely seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in many verses and other Hadiths. This act of seeking forgiveness is a part of sincere repentance. It can be understood that seeking forgiveness is an act of the tongue while the rest of sincere repentance involves turning away from the sin through actions. Sincere repentance also includes feeling genuine remorse, making a firm promise not to commit the sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. It is important to note, that not persisting on the same sin is a condition for the repentance to be accepted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 135:

“And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.”

It is extremely important for a muslim to be persistent in seeking forgiveness as this leads to deliverance from every worry, a way out from every difficulty and support from places where one would not expect. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1518.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the greatest cause of forgiveness namely, not associating anything with Allah, the Exalted. There are two types of associating things with Allah, the Exalted: major polytheism and minor polytheism. The major type is when one worships things other than Allah, the Exalted, or in addition to Him. The minor version is when one acts for other than to please Allah, the Exalted, such as showing off. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. In fact, the one who acts for the sake of people will be told by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts in this way will find that they will eventually be exposed in this world and no matter how well they treat others, they will never gain their real love or respect because of their bad intention. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705.

When one realizes the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, they only intend, think, act and speak for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, out of fear and love for Him. This behaviour minimises the chances of committing sins and whatever sins do occur will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3797, that the statement that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, removes all wrong actions.

This is the behaviour all muslims must strive to adopt. The foundation of it is gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways please to Allah, the Exalted. This will minimise one's sins and always encourage them towards sincere repentance whenever they happen to sin. This leads to forgiveness, peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Dealing with Allah, the Exalted, and People

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some important pieces of advice. The first is to fear Allah, the Exalted, through piety.

This is achieved when one fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is only achieved through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This advice encompasses all the teachings and duties of Islam. When one strives in this manner they will eventually reach the high level of faith called excellence. This is when one acts, such as performing the prayer, as if they witness Allah, the Exalted, observing them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This ensures one fulfils their duties both to Allah, the Exalted, and to the creation. The latter involves fulfilling the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam. This is best fulfilled by treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

The second advice given in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should follow up a sin with a righteous deed so that it wipes out the sin. This refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance. If one adds sincere repentance to their righteous deed then it will erase any sin, minor or major. But a part of acting rightly is to strive not to repeat the sin again, as sinning with the intention of following it up with a righteous deed is a dangerous misleading mentality. One should

strive not to commit sins and when they do occur, they must sincerely repent. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Finally, the main Hadith advises to treat people with good character. This is extremely important as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003. One should adopt this by learning and acting on the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is the character taught by the Holy Quran. Through this one will replace their negative characteristics with good ones. Those who mistreat others, even if they fulfil their duties to Allah, the Exalted, will find that on Judgment Day their good deeds are given to their victim and if necessary their victim's sins will be given to them. This might cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Companions

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected positively by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected negatively by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by them. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a muslim to concentrate on the material world over practically preparing for the hereafter. Meaning, they will hinder them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This attitude will become a great regret for them in both worlds, even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs, as using the blessings one has been granted in vain or sinful ways is the root of forgetting Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a muslim must practically show their love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world and adopting their lifestyle and behaviour. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates their love for them and their ultimate company in the hereafter. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Avoid Darkness

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

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

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin, a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin, the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world. This in turn, will lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

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

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by failing to fulfill the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of the worldly blessings they possess, such as their body and wealth. This trust is fulfilled when one uses every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the Creator and Owner of all blessings.

The greatest of these blessings is faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Faith is like a plant which must be constantly taken care of and nourished through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The death of this plant will extinguish the light of one's faith, which will result in them being left in darkness in both worlds.

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

A muslim must avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

Prophetic Manners

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2016, the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, described some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She advised that he was neither obscene nor loud-mouthed. He never replied evil with evil and instead forgave and overlooked the faults of others.

First of all, all muslims must understand that it is a duty on them to adopt the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

And 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.”

A muslim must never act or speak in an obscene way as this is hated by Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 464. Behaving in this manner is the very essence of bad character. And as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can predict the evil outcome of the one who reaches the Day of Judgment as an obscene person. In addition, the one who is obscene in speech is much more likely to enter Hell, as it only takes a single evil word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. Put simply, true faith and obscenity can never gather in a single person.

A muslim should not be loud-mouthed as this leads to the loss of respect from others, especially one's relatives. The loud-mouthed often comes across aggressive and can easily frighten others. This contradicts the behavior of a true muslim. A muslim must be gentle, kind and approachable when dealing with others, as this shows the true and peaceful nature of Islam. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 19:

"...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys."

Finally, a muslim must understand that as people are not perfect they are bound to make mistakes. Just like a person desires to be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, they should overlook and pardon others. Put simply, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. It

is foolishness not to forgive others yet expect the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

But it is important to note that forgiving others and blindly trusting others are two separate things. One is encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, but they must also take the necessary steps to avoid being wronged by their abuser again. Meaning, they should adjust their behaviour in order to protect themselves so that history does not repeat itself, while continuing to treat others according to the teachings of Islam.

Quality is Important

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim should save themselves from Hell even by giving half a date fruit in charity.

This Hadith, like many other teachings of Islam, indicates the importance of quality over quantity. The Devil often puts off muslims from performing righteous deeds by making them believe the deed is too small and therefore insignificant to Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, even other ignorant Muslims often discourage others from certain righteous deeds claiming they are insignificant and unnecessary.

It is important for a muslim not to fall for this trap and instead strive to perform all righteous deeds, big or small, as Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly observes one's quality and judges people based on it. An aspect of this quality is one's intention, meaning, whether one is doing it purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, or for some other reason, such as showing off.

A muslim should firstly concentrate on correcting the quality of their good deed, such as possessing a good intention, and then ensure that the source of the good deed, such as giving charity, is from a lawful source, as any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will not be accepted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 661. Next, a muslim should perform all voluntary righteous deeds

according to their means and strength. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465, that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are the regular ones, even if they are considered small.

In addition, regularly performing good deeds is more likely to change a muslim for the better compared to doing a big deed once in a blue moon. In respect to voluntary charity, a muslim should donate regularly according to their means, even if it is a single pound, and firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, will turn this into a mountain of reward on Judgment Day. This in fact, has been promised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 662.

To conclude, a muslim should concentrate on quality over quantity and perform all types of good deeds regularly according to their means and strength.

True Justice

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4721, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that those who acted with justice will be sitting on thrones of light close to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This includes those who are just in their decisions, in respect to their families and those under their care and authority.

It is important for muslims to always act with justice in all occasions. One must show justice to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They must use all the blessings they have been granted in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. This includes being just to their own body and mind by fulfilling their rights of food and rest, as well as using each limb according to its true purpose. Islam does not teach muslims to push their body and minds beyond their limits thereby causing themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things, such as wealth and authority. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell and has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

They should remain just even if it contradicts their desires and the desires of their loved ones. 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. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just...”

One must be just towards their dependents by fulfilling their rights and necessities according to the teachings of Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. An important aspect of this is teaching their dependents about Islam and the importance of implementing its teachings within their lives. They should not be neglected nor handed over to others, such as school and Mosque teachers. A person should not take on this responsibility if they are too lazy to act with justice in regards to them.

To conclude, no person is free of acting with justice, as the minimum is acting with justice in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and oneself.

Gaining Increase

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised three things. The first is that charity does not decrease one's wealth.

This is because whatever a muslim spends for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to any blessing, such as time, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate them. This compensation will be much more than what they originally used. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?...”

For example, Allah, the Exalted, may grant the one who spends for His sake with financial opportunities which leads to an overall increase in wealth. In addition, this could be referring to the reality that whatever is destined to be spent on a person, which is their true wealth, can never change irrespective of their behaviour or the behaviour of the entire creation. In fact, a person's provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. So in reality, one's charity will not change the amount of wealth which is destined to be spent on them, such as wealth spent on their food. Finally, charity does not reduce one's wealth, as one is only depositing their wealth in their hereafter account. This is like the one

who transfers money between two bank accounts their own. In this respect, charity does not reduce one's wealth, as the real beneficiary is oneself. Remembering this will prevent one from seeking gratitude from those they aid and it will prevent pride, as one is, in reality, benefiting no one other than themselves when they give charity.

The second thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person will become more honoured when they forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as the one who forgives others will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, which by definition causes their honour to increase. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

This shows that true honour does not lie in exalting over people but it lies in being merciful and forgiving. Simply put, if one desires to be forgiven for their mistakes they should forgive others. But it is important to note that one is encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, but they must also take the necessary steps to avoid being wronged by their abuser again. Meaning, they should adjust their behaviour in order to protect themselves so that history does not repeat itself, while continuing to treat others according to the teachings of Islam. Forgiving others does not mean being naive in respect to others.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a person will be raised in rank when they live with humility for the sake of Allah, the

Exalted. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility which is pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and includes treating others with respect and kindness. The humble person does not look down on people, as every good quality they possess was granted by Allah, the Exalted. The humble person does not reject the truth irrespective of who it comes from, as the source of truth is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Instead, they accept and act on it whenever they are confronted with it. This is true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

Loving for Allah, the Exalted

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6548, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that Allah, the Exalted, will shade the two people who loved each other for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Allah, the Exalted, will grant shade to these two people on a day when the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. If people struggle to cope with the heat of the Sun during summer can one imagine the intensity of the heat on Judgment Day?

Loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, leads to such a reward as this emotion is extremely difficult to control. And whoever is blessed with controlling it will find fulfilling the duties of Islam straight forward. These duties involve fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It is because of this reason loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, has been declared an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

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

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

Any type of negative feeling towards others over worldly reasons, such as envy, contradicts loving others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and must be avoided. This is achieved when one removes the negative characteristics they possess and replaces them with good characteristics, by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

To conclude, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themselves through actions, not just words. This is in fact an aspect of being a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they desire people to treat them.

True Independence

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever holds back from asking others will be granted independence. And whoever sincerely tries to be patient will be granted patience by Allah, the Exalted. And whoever is content with what they possess will be made self-sufficient. He concluded that there is no gift greater than patience.

There is no harm in asking for help from others when one is in need but a muslim should not get into this habit as it can lead to a loss of self-respect. This can be dangerous as the one who loses self-respect is more likely to commit sins as they stop caring what Allah, the Exalted, and others think about them. The one who unnecessarily asks others will also begin to rely on others to aid them instead of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, to aid them. Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, involves using the means one has been granted in lawful ways and then believing the outcome, which Allah, the Exalted, alone chooses, will be best for everyone involved. Therefore, a muslim should strive to utilize all the means they have been granted before turning to others for help. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted independence of people by Allah, the Exalted.

A muslim must force patience on themselves especially, during times of difficulty. The best way to achieve this is by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, will give an uncountable reward to the patient muslim is more likely to be

patient than the one who is ignorant of this fact. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

It is important to note that real patience is shown at the onset of a situation, not later on. When one demonstrates patience later on, this is acceptance, which even the most impatient person experiences.

The truly rich person is the one who is not needy and greedy for things. This occurs when one becomes satisfied with what they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one rightfully believes that Allah, the Exalted, gives what is best to each person according to His infinite knowledge. 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 person is truly rich whereas the one who is always greedy and needy for things is poor, even if they possess much wealth. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. Therefore, contentment with one's provision is true richness whereas the greed for more makes one needy meaning, poor.

Finally, patience is important to adopt as it is required in each element of obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and when facing destiny. Put simply, success in worldly or religious matters is not possible without patience. Therefore, it is a magnificent gift granted by Allah, the Exalted, to those who strive to adopt it.

Financial Matters

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2076, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, supplicated for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, on those who are lenient in financial matters, such as buying and selling goods, and when they demand the repayment of a loan.

It is important for muslims not to be greedy in financial matters, as greed pushes one towards the unlawful. Even if one avoids the unlawful, greed will deprive a muslim of this supplication of mercy, as greed will prevent them from acting leniently with others. Put simply, greed takes one far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

A muslim must never take advantage of others by over pricing their goods especially, in times of general difficulty, such as a financial crisis. In all financial matters muslims should make all matters clear to the other people involved, as hiding things, such as a defect in their goods, is deceitful and contradicts the characteristic of a true muslim. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when people deceive others in financial matters, the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, are removed. This removes satisfaction with their wealth, irrespective of how much they obtain and possess. This in turn causes one to become greedier. The more one becomes greedy, the less peace they will obtain.

Finally, when others are in financial difficulties a muslim should strive to aid them according to their means, as this leads to the constant support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. In fact, the one who waves a debt they are owed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be relieved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225.

Showing leniency and good conduct during business dealings will improve one's business reputation, which in turn will aid their business. So adopting leniency in matters of business leads to benefit in both worldly and religious matters.

Finally, adopting leniency in matters of business will also ensure a Muslim understands that their business is not their number one priority in life. It is nothing but a means to an end, the end being preparing practically for the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, the one who fails to show leniency in matters of business, will become greedier. And greed always focuses a person's attention to earning and hoarding the material world. This becomes their ultimate goal and number one priority in life. This then prevents them from practically preparing for the hereafter.

Life is a Mirror

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that Allah, the Exalted, will not show mercy to the one who does not show mercy to others.

Islam is a very simple religion. One of its fundamental teachings is that how people treat others, is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. For example, those who learn to overlook and forgive the mistakes of others 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?...”

Those who support others in beneficial worldly and religious matters such as emotional or financial aid will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. This same Hadith advises that the one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, if one treats others with kindness and respect, according to the teachings of Islam, they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. And those who mistreat others will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the obligatory duties which are connected to Him, such as the obligatory prayers. This is because a muslim must fulfill both duties in order to achieve success namely, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people.

An easy way to obtain divine mercy is to simply treat others how one desires to be treated by people. This is true for all people, irrespective of their faith, and in fact extends to all creatures.

Finally, it is important to note a muslim will only be treated kindly by Allah, the Exalted, if they treat others kindly for His sake. If they do it for any other reason than they will undoubtedly forfeit the reward mentioned in these teachings. The foundation of all acts and Islam itself is one's intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Blessings in Wealth and Life

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1979, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that maintaining the ties of kinship leads to an increase in wealth and life.

It is a duty on muslims to maintain the ties of kinship, as severing them is a major sin. The one who severs ties of kinship for worldly reasons will be cut off from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6518. In fact, this is such a serious sin that a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1909, warns that a person who severs ties of kinship over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. Maintaining ties of kinship involves fulfilling the rights of one's relatives according to the teachings of Islam in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They should seek the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, at all times and not the pleasure of their relatives, as this encourages one to compromise on the teachings of Islam. One must not expect nor demand gratitude from their relatives when fulfilling their rights, as doing so would prove their insincerity. A muslim must gently and kindly command good and forbid evil and in cases where a relative fails to repent from their sins, a muslim should not sever ties with them, even over religious issues. They should instead continue aiding them in beneficial things, as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent. Whereas, cutting off from them may well push them further away from right guidance.

The increase in wealth mentioned in the main Hadith could mean that Allah, the Exalted, provides them with more financial opportunities, which causes an increase in their lawful wealth. More importantly, it

could mean that Allah, the Exalted, blesses a muslim's wealth with such grace that it fulfills their needs and the needs of their dependents and provides them with peace of mind and body, which in reality is true wealth. The one who severs ties of kinship will lose out on this grace, which will lead them to feeling unsatisfied irrespective of how much wealth they obtain. And it will always seem that their wealth is not enough to cover their needs and the needs of their dependents.

The increase in life mentioned in the main Hadith refers to being granted grace in one's time so that they manage to fulfill all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and to people, while still finding time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excessiveness, extravagance or waste. But the one who severs the ties of kinship will lose out on this grace and so no matter how little responsibilities they have, it will never seem like they have enough time to fulfill them all and enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world with moderation. They will instead spend the day dealing with one issue after the other without any rest or peace of mind.

Easy Reward

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim can gain the same reward as the one who fasts every day and offers the voluntary prayer all night if they financially support a widow or a poor person.

In this busy modern world muslims often struggle to make time to perform voluntary righteous deeds, such as voluntary fasts or the voluntary night prayer. Islam, as always, gives everyone, irrespective of their lifestyle, a convenient way to receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. In this case, a muslim can financially support a widow or poor person in order to obtain this great reward. It is even easier in this day and age to sponsor the needy as one does not need to journey to them in order to aid them. One can use reputable and trustworthy charities in order to donate regularly. And a muslim must not be fooled and deterred from donating by believing their money will not reach the needy as Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to their intention, irrespective of if the money reaches the poor or not. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A muslim's duty is to donate through a reputable and trustworthy charity with the correct intention namely, to please Allah, the Exalted.

Sponsoring the needy is not expensive as most people spend more money on their monthly phone bill and other unnecessary luxury things. The sad truth is that if each financially-able muslim sponsored a needy person it would dramatically decrease poverty in the world.

Finally, the one who cannot afford to do this should encourage the one who can afford it and as a result they will receive the reward of donating the charity. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674.

This therefore, leaves no reason why all Muslims should miss out on obtaining this easy reward.

Neighbours

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6014, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he was encouraged to treat neighbours kindly to such an extent that he thought that a neighbour would become an heir of their muslim neighbour.

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of treating neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words, can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour?

A muslim must be patient when mistreated by their neighbour. In fact, a muslim should treat them kindly in cases like this. Repaying good with good is not difficult. A good neighbour is the one who repays harm with good. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 34:

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

But it is important to note that one should not allow their neighbours or others to cross the limits and they should defend themselves when it is appropriate. Overlooking and pardoning applies in minor situations which will not negatively affect them in the future, nor will it resurface between the people involved, again and again.

A muslim should respect the private space of their neighbour's property but at the same time greet them and offer them help without being too intrusive. They should be supported by whatever means is available to a person, such as financial or emotional support.

A muslim should conceal the faults of their neighbours when they will be no negative consequences. The one who conceals the faults of others will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted. And the one who exposes the faults of others, Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults and publicly disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

To conclude, one must treat their neighbour in a way they desire their neighbours to treat them, which includes showing kindness and respect.

Visiting Paradise

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6551, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the muslim who visits a sick person is in an orchard of Paradise until they return.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith includes visiting any sick person, irrespective of their faith. Even though, this is undoubtedly a great deed, it is important for a muslim to firstly perform this righteous deed solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. If they do it for any other reason, such as to show off to people, they will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, they should fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting the sick, according to the teachings of Islam, in order to obtain their reward. In this day and age it is easy to contact the sick and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time, as a sick person will be resting throughout the day and this will minimise the disruption caused to their family. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the sick person and their relatives. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should encourage the sick to be patient and discuss the rewards associated with it and generally discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter.

If a person is told to return at another time by the sick person or their household, a Muslim must accept this without holding any grudges, as this has specifically been commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 28:

"...And if it is said to you, "Go back," then go back; it is purer for you. And Allāh is Knowing of what you do."

Only when one behaves in this manner will they obtain the reward outlined in the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they fail in this, they will either gain no reward or they may well be left with sins, depending on how they behaved. Unfortunately, many muslims enjoy performing this righteous deed but fail to fulfill its conditions correctly. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

"No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward."

Thinking Positively

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking well about people is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Interpreting things in a negative way often leads to sins, such as backbiting and slander. A muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set affects people from a family unit to a national level. 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 understand that even if they assume someone is taking a dig at them, they should still accept their advice if it is based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Always interpreting things negatively also gives rise to a powerful mental illness namely, paranoia. The one who adopts paranoia will always suspect others of bad things. This can be extremely destructive to relationships, such as marriages.

One should strive to interpret things where possible in a positive way, which leads to a positive mentality. And a positive mindset leads to healthy relationships, feelings and unity. Whereas, always interpreting things in a negative way encourages one to always think and act negatively towards others, even when their behaviour is good. This only prevents one from fulfilling the rights of others, something which has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

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

Public Gatherings

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4815, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people must fulfill the rights of the public road when they meet up in public.

The first thing advised in this Hadith is that Muslims should lower their gaze and not look at things which are unlawful to them. In fact, one should protect each organ of their body, such as their tongue and ears in the same way. This is achieved when one avoids the things which do not concern them.

The next thing advised in this Hadith is that they should keep their harm away from others. This includes both harm in the form of speech, such as foul language and backbiting and harm caused through physical actions. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer and Muslim until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from people and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. A Muslim should instead assist others in public, according to their means. If they cannot do this, then the least they can do is keep their physical and verbal harm away from others.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that one should return the Islamic greeting of peace to others. This includes initiating the Islamic greeting of peace through one's words and showing peace to others in one's actions and other speech. It is pure hypocrisy to

extend peace to others through one's words and then harm them through their actions and other speech.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to command good and forbid evil. This should be carried out according to the three levels discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2172. The highest level is to do it with one's actions, within the bounds of Islam. The next level is to do it with one's words. And the lowest level is to do it with one's heart meaning, secretly. This duty must always be fulfilled according to Islamic knowledge and in a gentle way. Where possible, this should be done privately in order to avoid embarrassing others, as this can often cause one to reject good advice. This should also be done at the appropriate time, for example, after an angry person has calmed down, as good advice at the wrong time is often ineffective. Often muslims advise the correct thing but as they do it in a harsh way, they only drive people further away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is therefore vital to combine correct knowledge with kind behavior so that the good advice affects others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

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

As these characteristics are difficult to adopt and implement publicly, one should choose the safer option and minimize socializing with others in public, as it often leads to more harm than good.

To conclude, it is important to note that a muslim should adopt and show these characteristics towards all people, irrespective of their faith.

Key to All Evil

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a muslim must never consume alcohol, as it is the key to all evil.

Unfortunately, this major sin has increased amongst the muslims over time. This is the key to all evil as it gives rise to other sins. This is quite obvious as a drunk loses control over their tongue and physical actions. One only needs to look at the news to observe how much crime is committed due to drinking alcohol. Even those who drink moderately only cause damage to their bodies, which science has proven. The physical and mental diseases associated with alcohol are numerous and cause a heavy burden on the National Health Service and the tax payers. It is the key to all evil as it negatively affects all three aspects of a person: their body, mind and soul. It destroys the relationships between people, as alcohol negatively affects one's behaviour. For example, there is a clear correlation between alcohol consumption and domestic violence. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

The fact that drinking alcohol has been placed next to things which are associated with polytheism in this verse, highlights how important it is to avoid.

It is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who drinks alcohol regularly will not enter Paradise.

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. None the less, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

Alcohol is a unique major sin as it has been cursed in ten different ways in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. These include the alcohol itself, the one who produces it, the one it is produced for, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried to, the one who uses the wealth obtained through selling it, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it. The one who deals with something that has been cursed like this will not obtain true success unless they sincerely repent.

Even though, breaking alcohol addiction is difficult, none the less, one must strive hard to avoid all the things which will tempt them towards it, such as bad friends. They must utilise all the help available to them, such as counselling sessions. They must never forget that Allah, the

Exalted, does not burden a person with a duty they cannot complete.
Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

These things will aid them in turning away from this major sin for good.

True Nobility

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that nobility does not lie in one's lineage, as all people are the descendants of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and he was made from dust. He concluded that people should give up boasting about their relatives and lineage.

It is important to understand that even though some ignorant muslims have adopted the attitude of other nations by creating castes and sects, thereby believing some people are superior to others based on these groups, Islam declared a simple criterion for superiority namely, piety. Meaning, the more a muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the greater they are in rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

This verse destroys all other standards which have been created by ignorant people, such as one's race, ethnicity, wealth, gender or social status.

In addition, if a muslim is proud of a pious person in their lineage they should correctly demonstrate this belief by praising Allah, the Exalted, and following in their footsteps. Boasting about others without following in their footsteps will not help someone in either this world or the next. This has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945.

Finally, the one who is proud of others but fails to follow in their footsteps is indirectly dishonoring them, as the outside world will observe their bad character and assume their righteous ancestor behaved in the same manner. These people should therefore strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of this reason. These are like those people who adopt the outward traditions and advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, yet, fail to adopt his inner noble character. The outside world will only think negatively about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they observe the bad character of these muslims.

Finally, remembering the origins of mankind will prevent one from adopting pride, an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Pride only encourages one to look down on others, even though everything good they possess was created and granted by Allah, the Exalted. Pride will also encourage one to reject the truth, when it does not originate from them. Therefore, pride in anything, such as one's pious ancestor, must be avoided at all costs.

Two Parts of Gratitude

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less, showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others, such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands, as He is the source of the blessing and they must show gratitude to the person who helped them, as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness, according to their means, even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The one who does not show gratitude to the outward manifestation of the help of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, a person, will less likely show it directly to Allah, the Exalted.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

If a muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Destruction of Deeds

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

Envy is a serious and major sin because the envier's problem is not with another person. In reality, their problem is with Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who granted the blessing which is envied. So a person's envy only demonstrates their displeasure with the allocation and choice of Allah, the Exalted. They believe Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake when He allocated a particular blessing to another person instead of them.

Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the envied person, which is undoubtedly a sin. The worst kind is when the envier strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing themselves. Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing their blessing. Even though this type is not a sin, it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and praiseworthy if it is over a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The second person who can be lawfully envied is the one who uses their knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

An envious muslim should strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person envied, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them, until their envy becomes love for them. They must never let their envy prevent them fulfilling the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam.

A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, always allocates blessings according to His infinite knowledge and wisdom. Meaning, He gives each person what is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Therefore, instead of envying others, one must busy themselves in using the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in ways pleasing to Him. This will lead to an increase in blessings, as this attitude is showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

In addition, this will lead to peace of mind, which the persistent envier never obtains. 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."

Corruption

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who offers bribes and the one who takes bribes are both cursed.

A curse involves the removal of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs, true lasting peace and success in both worldly and religious matters is not possible. Whatever worldly success one obtains, such as wealth, through a bribe, will become a source of great difficulty, stress and punishment in both worlds, unless one sincerely repents. As the bribe is unlawful, any good deed which it is used on will be rejected and recorded as a sin. Even if the bribe taker somehow manages to fulfil their obligations towards Allah, the Exalted, their sins against people may well lead them to destruction on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

In addition, without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the three aspects of faith are simply not possible to fulfill correctly namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Unfortunately, in this day and age the major sin of bribery has become very common in all parts of the world. The only difference is that in third world countries it is done openly and in more developed countries, secretly. In most cases, bribery involves a person offering gifts to

influential people, such as a judge, in order to gain something which is not theirs. The only time a bribe will not be recorded as a sin is when one is forced to offer a bribe in order to recover their own property. The curse in this case is on the one who takes the bribe.

It is important to note, if muslims as a whole desire to eliminate bribery and other corrupt practices, then they must avoid them themselves. Only when this correct attitude is adopted on an individual level will it affect those in social and political positions of influence. The reason these people act in this way is because they observe the society as a whole acting on corrupt practices themselves. But if society, on an individual level, rejected these practices, no person in a position of social or political influence would dare act in this way, as they know the people would not stand for it.

Commanding Correctly

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who contradicts their own advice when commanding good and forbidding evil will be punished in Hell.

Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by advising only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, many people advise for other reasons, such as to gain popularity. For example, some scholars often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side, as they desire a central seat. When their intention became like this, Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their advice and thus they now have little positive influence over their listeners. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 44:

"Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?"

Muslims should strive to always act on their own advice before commanding others to do so, as behaving in this manner is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

This does not mean one must become perfect before advising others, as this is not possible. Instead, they should correct their intention and prove this through their actions by striving to act on their own advice before advising others. Only with this attitude will they avoid the punishment mentioned in this Hadith. The failure in acting on this principle has caused the advice of muslims to become ineffective, even though the number of advisers has dramatically increased over the years.

Questions

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against asking too many questions, as this led to the destruction of the past nations. Muslims should instead do what they have been commanded, according to their capacity, and refrain from what they have been prohibited from.

Muslims should not adopt this mentality as people who have a habit of asking too many questions often fail in fulfilling their duties and from acquiring beneficial knowledge, as they are too busy asking and researching about less important and sometimes irrelevant information. This mentality can inspire a person to argue and debate over these types of issues also. Unfortunately, this attitude is quite widespread amongst muslims today, as they often argue about non obligatory and less important issues, instead of concentrating on fulfilling their obligatory duties and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly, meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult. In respect to one's faith, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. If it will not, then they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge. In respect to one's worldly life, relevance is determined by deciding whether learning something will

help one fulfill their worldly duties, such as their duties at work. If it will not, then they should not waste their time researching and learning this piece of knowledge.

Finally, one must ensure they avoid the mentality mentioned in the main Hadith, especially, when they study Islamic teachings, as one can easily turn what should be a means of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of one's life, to an academic study on Islam which has no practical effects on their life and behaviour. The latter attitude can easily be adopted when one persists on researching and learning about knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This is easily identified as the knowledge which Allah, the Exalted, has not spoken about in the Holy Quran nor what has been discussed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in his Hadiths. All religious knowledge not discussed in these two sources of guidance is irrelevant and therefore not needed to guide one to peace and success in both worlds. If it was needed, it would have been discussed in these two sources of guidance. Therefore, any religious knowledge rooted in the two sources of guidance is relevant and must be researched and acted on, all other religious knowledge should be avoided.

The Proud

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

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

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their real status in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted. They may believe they are great because of the few insincere and imperfect good deeds they have done while they are disliked by Allah, the Exalted, because of their many sins. In addition,

looking down upon others is foolish as one is unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. Meaning, the person they look down upon may well die as a sincere Muslim whereas, they may die as a disbeliever.

In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to oneself is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

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

A muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognize that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace, as no one has been more honored than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. A humble person accepts the truth, irrespective of who it

comes from, as they know the source of truth is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Instead of looking down on others, they look at others with the eye of mercy and compassion and support this with sincere actions, all the while hoping Allah, the Exalted, will look upon them with mercy and compassion. They understand that one will be treated by Allah, the Exalted, according to how they treat others. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Religion of Ease

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 39, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that religion is simple and straight forward. And a muslim should not over burden themselves, as they will not be able to keep up with it.

This means that a muslim should always lead a simple religious and worldly life. Islam does not demand muslims to overburden themselves in performing righteous deeds. But it in fact teaches simplicity, which is the most beloved religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. A muslim should firstly strive to fulfil their obligatory duties, which are undoubtedly within their strength to fulfil as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a muslim with more than they can bear. This is confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286 of the Holy Quran:

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

Next, they should take some time out of their day to study Islamic teachings so that they can act on the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to their strength. This attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

If a muslim persists on this behaviour they will be provided with such mercy that they will fulfil all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and find time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world without excess, waste or extravagance.

This is how a muslim makes things easier for themselves. And if they possess dependents, such as children, they should teach them the same, thereby making things easier for them also. Overburdening oneself makes things hard and can push one to completely quit. And relaxing too much will make things hard as one will lose out on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds through laziness. A balance is therefore best, which Islam always encourages.

As Islam is simple, the lawful and unlawful are clear, easy to understand and easy to comply with. One must therefore not complicate things for themselves or their dependents by researching and acting on religious knowledge that is not rooted in the two sources of guidance meaning, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one adheres strictly to these two sources, they will find Islam easy to understand and implement.

Finally, by extension one should strive to keep their worldly life simple. This is achieved when one strives for the material world, such as lawful wealth, according to their needs and responsibilities while avoiding extravagance and waste. The more one adheres to this the more relaxed their worldly life will become. When this is coupled with their simple religion, it leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds.

True Knowledge

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who obtains religious knowledge in order to show off to scholars, argue with others or attract attention to themselves will go to Hell.

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge, Muslims must understand that knowledge will only benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

In reality, knowledge is like rain water which falls on different types of trees. Some trees grow by this water in order to benefit others, such as a fruit tree. Whereas, other trees grow by this water and become a nuisance to others. Even though, the rain water is the same in both cases yet the outcomes are very different. Similarly, religious knowledge is the same for people but if one adopts the incorrect intention then it will become a means of their destruction. Conversely, if one adopts the correct intention it will become a means of their salvation.

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters, as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to

enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

In addition, one must couple their good intention with acting on their knowledge, as knowledge without action is not beneficial knowledge, it is merely information. Failing to act on one's knowledge is like a doctor who fails to implement their knowledge of medicine to treat people. The same way they do not benefit themselves or others, neither does a Muslim who possesses Islamic knowledge and fails to implement it. In fact, this person has been compared to a donkey that carries books of knowledge. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“...and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]...”

In addition, whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649. Therefore, Muslims must share the useful knowledge they gain with others. It is simply foolish not to as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a Muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. Those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others became known as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

Finally, the purpose of gaining knowledge is not to defeat others in debates. The duty of a Muslim is to present the truth to others correctly with strong evidence. They have not been assigned the duty of forcing people to accept the truth through argumentation and debating. This attitude only pushes people further from the truth. Instead, one should explain the truth to people without arguing and show this truth by acting on it themselves. This is how the righteous predecessors behaved and this method is much more effective in bringing others towards the truth.

Real Modesty

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2458, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that showing true modesty to Allah, the Exalted, involves guarding the head and what it contains and to protect the stomach and what it contains and to remember death often. He concluded by declaring that whoever intends to seek the hereafter should leave the adornments of the material world.

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Vain things are important to avoid as they will be a regret for a person on Judgement Day and they are often the first step to committing sins. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like one's intention is the inward and hidden foundation of Islam, the outward and apparent foundation of Islam is earning and utilizing the lawful.

Modesty to Allah, the Exalted, also includes remembering death often. Remembering death is important as it encourages one to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from sins, as one is never sure when they will encounter death. It reminds one that this world is not their permanent home and they will certainly move from it. Remembering this will encourage one to prepare for their destination meaning, the hereafter. This preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who avoids the remembrance of death will neglect preparing for their inevitable trip to the hereafter and as a result they will concentrate all their efforts and utilise their blessings and resources on enjoying and beautifying this world. This attitude will prevent one from remembering Allah, the Exalted, and sincerely obeying Him, and this in turn, leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, modesty towards Allah, the Exalted, includes giving priority to the hereafter over the excess of this material world. It is important to note, this includes taking from the material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excess or extravagance, as these are disliked by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al Araf, verse 31:

"...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."

Prioritising the hereafter also involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of on satisfying one's desires. The one who behaves in this manner will find peace and success in this world and in the hereafter. This success and peace is therefore only obtained by prioritising the hereafter over enjoying the unnecessary aspects of this material world. 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."

Acting Correctly

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that deeds should be done correctly, sincerely and moderately. He added that a person's deeds will not take them to Paradise and concluded that the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, are those which are regular even if they are few.

Muslims should ensure that they perform deeds correctly meaning, according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as performing deeds without this guidance will lead one away from the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

Next, they must perform them for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and not for any other reason, such as showing off. These people will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Muslims should perform voluntary righteous deeds moderately without over burdening themselves as this often leads to one giving up. Instead, they should act according to their capacity and means regularly even if these actions are little in size and number, as this is far superior to big actions which are performed once in a while. Moderation also prevents one from neglecting any of their duties and responsibilities, whether they are in respect to Allah, the Exalted, or people. Moderation also allows one to fulfil all their responsibilities while ensuring they have plenty of time to enjoy lawful pleasures without excessiveness, extravagance or waste.

Finally, a muslim must understand that their righteous deeds are a blessing from Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, strength and opportunity to perform them comes from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims will only enter Paradise through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, no matter how many good deeds one performs they will never be able to show adequate gratitude for the countless blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. Understanding these facts prevent one from adopting the deadly characteristic of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 266.

Gaining the Love of Allah, the Exalted, and People

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted, and the love of people.

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world, which are beyond their needs and responsibilities. Meaning, a muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. When one persists on this attitude they will only use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

This is how a muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience, which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Finally, a muslim can obtain the love of people by not desiring their worldly possessions. In reality, a person only behaves negatively towards others when they feel others actively desire their possessions or when others actively compete for the worldly things they themselves desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which they desire through competition with others, can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a muslim instead occupies themselves with acting on the first part of this Hadith, it will prevent them from competing for the excess worldly things others desire, as the vast majority of these desires are for unnecessary worldly things. And if a muslim keeps their harm away from the self and possessions of others, which according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, is the sign of a true believer, then they will gain the love of people also.

Arguing

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1993, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever avoids arguing, even if they are right, will be given a house in the middle of Paradise.

It is important to understand that the characteristic of a true muslim is not to argue or debate 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 any way. The only time one's rank in both worlds' increases is when they avoid arguing and instead present the truth or accept 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 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 you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller."

A muslim should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements, over time it can cause enmity to build up between them and others, which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even lead to the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this, it is important for muslims to let things go and not harbor negative feelings towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themselves to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themselves always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues, due to the difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding this principle is a branch of finding peace in this world.

One should not argue with others who disagrees to the clear teachings of Islam. Instead, they should not take them as a friend, as one will be positively or negatively affected by their companions. Instead, one should maintain respect towards them and fulfill their rights, according to the teachings of Islam, while avoiding socializing with them unnecessarily.

Spreading Gossip

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 290, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who spreads malicious gossip will not enter Paradise.

This is the one who spreads gossip, whether it is true or not, which causes problems between people and leads to fractured and broken relationships. This is an evil characteristic and those who behave in such a manner are in fact human devils, as this mentality belongs to none other than the Devil. He always strives to cause separation between people. Allah, the Exalted has cursed this type of person in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every backbiter and slanderer.”

How can one expect Allah, the Exalted, to fix their problems and bestow them with blessings if this curse has surrounded them? The only time tale bearing is acceptable is when one is warning others of a danger.

It is a duty on a muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. 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 chapter 24 An Nur, verse 12:

“Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of themselves [i.e., one another] and say, “This is an obvious falsehood”?”

A muslim should forbid the tale bearer from continuing with this evil characteristic and urge them to sincerely repent. As commanded in the Holy Quran, a muslim should not harbor any ill will against the person that supposedly said something bad about them or others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

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

This same verse teaches muslims not to try to prove or disprove the tale bearer by spying on others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

Instead the tale bearer should be ignored. A muslim should not mention the information given to them by the tale bearer to another person or mention the tale bearer as this would make them a tale bearer as well.

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent. One must remember that the one who gossips about others with a person, will also gossip about that person with others.

Finally, as the tale bearer wronged people, they will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victims forgive them first. As people are not so merciful and forgiving, this may lead to the tale bearer giving their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the talebearer will take the sins of their victims on Judgement Day. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Finally, the warning in the main Hadith of losing out on Paradise, can easily occur for a tale bearer, as the malicious gossip they initiated can easily spread like wildfire across the community and even the world, through social media. As a result, the tale bearer who initiated the gossip will have a share in the sin of every person that discusses this piece of gossip. And their sins will continue to increase even after their death, as long as the gossip they initiated continues to be discussed. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674.

Therefore, one must avoid this dangerous outcome by always avoiding gossiping about others, just like they dislike for others to gossip about them. If one must speak about others, they should do so in a positive way otherwise they should remain silent.

Under Your Care

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2409, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person is a guardian and therefore responsible for the things under their care.

The greatest thing a muslim is a guardian of is their faith. Therefore, they must strive to fulfill its responsibility by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This guardianship also includes every blessing one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, which includes external things, such as wealth, and internal things, such as one's body. A muslim must fulfill the responsibility of these things by using them in the way prescribed by Islam. For example, a muslim should only use their eyes to look at lawful things, their tongue to utter only lawful and beneficial words and their wealth in beneficial and virtuous ways.

This guardianship also extends to others within one's life, such as relatives and friends. A muslim must fulfill this responsibility by fulfilling their rights, such as providing for them and gently commanding good and forbidding evil, according to the teachings of Islam. One should not cut off from others, especially over worldly issues. Instead, they should

continue to treat them kindly hoping they will change for the better. This guardianship includes one's children. A muslim must guide them by leading by example, as this by far is the most effective way in guiding children. They must obey Allah, the Exalted, practically as discussed earlier, and teach their children to do the same. The root of this involves gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

To conclude, according to this Hadith, everyone has some sort of responsibility they have been entrusted with. So they should gain and act on the relevant knowledge in order to fulfill them, as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted, and will therefore be questioned about on Judgement Day. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 34:

"...And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned."

The World Gathered

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2346, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever wakes up in the morning safe from danger, healthy and having food for the day, is as if the world was gathered for them.

In this day and age, where many people around the world are living in unsafe countries, a muslim who has been blessed with safety should make use of it by using their freedom to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, they should take advantage of journeying to the Mosques for the congregational prayers and religious gatherings of knowledge.

In addition, muslims should extend this sense of security to others, irrespective of their faith, so that the whole society becomes secure from danger. In fact, according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a person cannot be a true muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. Simply put, a muslim should treat others in the same way they desire to be treated by people.

A muslim must take advantage of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, as it is a blessing which is often only truly appreciated until it is

lost. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Those who make good use of their good health by obeying Allah, the Exalted, will find that they will receive His support when they eventually lose their good health. For example, the one who falls sick will receive the reward for doing the same righteous deeds they used to do when they were healthy, even if they no longer do them because of their sickness. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who fail to make use of their good health are unlikely to receive this support. It is important to note, making use of one's health includes striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents, while avoiding extravagance and waste.

One of the major concerns of a person is their provision. A muslim should remember that it was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. The one who obtains their daily provision should concern themselves with their other duties and plan for tomorrow without stressing, as their provision is guaranteed.

Finally, the main Hadith also encourages one to adopt a simple lifestyle, as this leads to peace of mind and body. The more one strives for the unnecessary aspects of the material world, the more they will stress. For example, the one who owns one house will have less stress and things to deal with than the one who owns two houses. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that simplicity is a part of faith. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118.

Looking at Others

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to observe those who possess less worldly things than them instead of those who possess more, as this will prevent them from becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some incorrectly observe the lives of others, which appear to be better than their own life. For example, normal people often observe celebrities and mistakenly believe their life is better. In most cases, this concept is not true, as people who appear to be in a better situation may well be facing difficulties which would make others not wish to trade places with them. An outsider will only observe things from one shallow 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 look 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 inspire people to become ungrateful over what they possess. The correct mind-set, which has been advised in this Hadith, will prevent one becoming ungrateful 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.

This will encourage them to be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, for what He has granted them. This gratitude is practically shown by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will lead to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

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. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

But in respect to one's religion, they should always observe those who are more dedicated to Islam than them. This attitude will prevent one from adopting laziness when they observe those who are less dedicated to Islam than them. Observing others who are less dedicated to Islam can even encourage one to justify and belittle their sins, which is a dangerous path to adopt. Observing those who are more dedicated to Islam will also encourage one to strive harder in their dedication to Islam in order to fulfil their potential. The root of this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Judging Actions

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that righteousness is good character and a sin creates a negative internal feeling and its doer would dislike others finding out about it.

This Hadith indicates that the root of all good and righteousness is good character. This is when one fulfills their duty towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And it includes fulfilling the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam. This can be fulfilled when one treats people in the same way they desire others to treat them. In fact, a person will not become a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. Good character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people is important to adopt as it will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day and the person who possesses good character will gain the equivalent reward of the one who prays and fasts continuously. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003.

The main Hadith under discussion also indicates how to judge one's actions. A sin is something which creates a negative internal feeling and the sinner would dislike others finding about their actions. If a muslim adheres to this advice they will avoid the vast majority of sins, as human beings have been created in a way which alerts them when they commit most sins. This guilty conscience is in fact, a proof that one's soul has

been predisposed to believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement, as one feels negatively towards sins, even when they fully believe they will not be held accountable for them by people, such as the police.

It is important to note, muslims must still strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, as this internal warning does not occur with all sins and they will lose this warning system if they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244. But none the less, it is still an excellent deterrent from sins, which muslims must pay heed to.

Real Patience

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

First of all, patience is when one controls their words and actions so that they maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, whenever they encounter a difficulty.

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

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patience believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a soul with more than they can handle, it leaves no one with an excuse not to show patience and maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through words and actions, from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

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

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

Rights of Muslims

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, listed five rights a muslim owes another muslim.

Firstly, they are to respond to the greeting of peace, even if replying contradicts their desires. More importantly a muslim must fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace practically by showing peace and kindness towards others through their speech and actions. It is extremely hypocritical to extend the Islamic greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through their actions or other words. In addition, this peace must be shown to others who are not present also. For example, the two Muslims who greet each other must not harm others through their speech or actions either. This is the true meaning of the Islamic greeting of peace.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith under discussion is visiting the sick. A muslim should try to visit sick muslims in order provide them physical and psychological support. It would be difficult to visit all sick muslims but if each muslim at least visited their sick relatives then the vast majority of the sick would obtain this support. A Muslim must contact the sick person and their household before visiting them in order to arrange a convenient time. All forms of vain or sinful speech and actions must be avoided, such as gossiping, otherwise a muslim will only earn sins instead of blessings. They should not remain long in order to avoid causing discomfort to the sick person or their household.

Next, a muslim, when possible, should attend the funeral of other muslims, as each attendee supplicates for the deceased to be forgiven and benefits from being reminded of death and practically preparing for it, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Just like one desires others to attend their funeral and supplicate for them, they too should do this for others. In addition, attending a funeral is an excellent way to determine whether the family of the deceased needs any further support, such as financial support. Each Muslim should aid them according to their means, just like they would like the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need. In fact, the one who aids others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will gain His support. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should accept the invitation for meals and social events, as long as no unlawful or disliked activities take place, which in this day and age, is quite rare. An important point to note is that some muslims attend social events where unlawful or disliked things occur and cite this Hadith to support their actions. One should not misinterpret the divine teachings in order to fulfil their own desires, as this is clear misguidance and an invitation to divine punishment. One should attend the social events where lawful things are taken place and beneficial worldly and religious things are discussed. One must be on guard to ensure they avoid vain and evil actions and speech otherwise avoiding socialising is better for them.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion concludes by advising muslims to supplicate for the muslim who praises Allah, the Exalted, after they sneeze. Generally speaking, this encourages one to always think and behave positively towards others, especially Muslims. They

should strive to benefit others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, thereby not desiring nor hoping for any gratitude from them, according to their means, such as a supplication on their behalf. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

Abandoning Others

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that it is not lawful for a muslim to abandon another muslim for more than three days.

This applies to those who abandon other muslims for worldly reasons. Even though it is lawful to abandon someone over a religious reason, it is far superior to maintain ties with them and continue the duty of kindly commanding good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. This behavior will be far more effective in encouraging the sinful to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, than abandoning them. A muslim should continue to help others in matters of good and forbid them from matters which are bad. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Muslims have been commanded to unite and not separate from each other, as unity leads to strength. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were few in number but as they remained united they overcame entire nations. Unfortunately, not fulfilling this important duty is one of the reasons why the general strength of the muslims has weakened over time even though their number has increased.

In worldly matters, Muslims have been given three days where they can avoid another Muslim. The reason for this concession is that controlling one's anger can be difficult and most people require time in order to achieve this and time to realise the worldly issue is not worth severing ties over. Those who struggle to control their anger should take advantage of this concession and avoid the one they are angry with, as one often does and says things while angry which leads to further problems in both worlds. Islam is perfectly suited to the mentality of humans and therefore takes this into consideration when setting out a code of conduct.

The one who abandons other Muslims for more than three days over worldly issues, should fear that they may well be abandoned by the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as one is treated by Allah, the Exalted, according to how they treat others. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Guarantee of Paradise

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

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

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

The main Hadith under discussion also advises to safeguard oneself from consuming the unlawful. This will lead to all of one's righteous deeds being rejected, irrespective of their intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. The same way the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. Without correcting these two

foundations of Islam one cannot achieve peace and success in either this world or the next.

The second aspect of the main Hadith under discussion advises muslims to safeguard their chastity meaning, avoid unlawful relationships. A muslim has been given a way to achieve this namely, marriage. If a muslim is not in the right position to get married, such as financially, then they should fast often as this reduces carnal desires. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1905. Safeguarding one's chastity is vital, as illegal relationships always lead to unwanted and deprived children, a failure in fulfilling the rights of one's partners and broken homes, which in turn increases crime, mental disorders and other social problems on a mass scale.

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

Entering Paradise

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 28, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised three characteristics which lead a muslim to Paradise.

The first is to consume lawful food. This includes avoiding obtaining and utilizing the unlawful, such as wealth, in any aspect of one's life. It has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, that the righteous deeds of a muslim who utilizes unlawful provision will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Obtaining lawful provision is the foundation stone of Islam, without it success is not possible. As one's lawful provision was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, a Muslim must therefore utilise their strength and resources in obtaining it, full well believing they will receive it. This will prevent them from pursuing the unlawful.

The second characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is following the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean only learning them but more importantly it includes acting on them. This encompasses fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A muslim must never cherry pick which traditions to follow nor misinterpret them in order to fulfill their desires. They should not rearrange the order of priority of his traditions meaning, the established traditions should be acted on first followed by the non-established meaning, the non-regular traditions. As the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the

practical role model of the Holy Quran, it is not possible to achieve success and peace in either this world or the next without following in his footsteps practically. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is keeping one's harm away from people. This is vital to fulfill as according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a person cannot be a true muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions, irrespective of their faith. The one who mistreats others will find that justice will be established on Judgment Day. They will be forced to give their good deeds to their victims and if required, take their sins. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One must instead treat others how they wish people to treat them. This will ensure they not only keep their harm away from others but also aid others according to their means, in order to please Allah, the Exalted.

Following the Holy Quran

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

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

But as warned by the main Hadith, the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who avoid understanding and acting on it or intentionally misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Finally, it is important to understand that even though the Holy Quran is a cure for worldly problems, a muslim should not only use it for this purpose. Meaning, they should not only recite it in order to fix their worldly problems thereby, treating the Holy Quran like a tool, which is removed during a difficulty and then placed back in a toolbox when the issue is resolved. The main function of the Holy Quran is to guide one through the difficulties of this world in order to reach the hereafter safely. This purpose is not possible to fulfill without understanding and acting on the Holy Quran. Blind recitation is simply not enough. Neglecting this main function and only using it to fix one's worldly problems is not correct as it contradicts the behaviour of a true muslim. It is like the one who purchases a car with many different accessories yet it cannot be driven, which is the main purpose of a car. There is no doubt that this person is simply foolish. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

Better than Worship

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge, even if one does not act on it, is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Learning a verse includes studying and more importantly, practically implementing its teachings in one's life. And it is important to note, a muslim will only gain this reward when they sincerely strive to act on the topic of knowledge they have learned and practically implement it when the opportunity presents itself. Only when one does not gain the opportunity to act on their topic of Islamic knowledge will they gain the reward of offering 1000 cycles of prayer, even if they do not actually act on it. This is because Allah, the Exalted, judges and rewards people based on their intention and will therefore grant reward to those who would sincerely act when given the opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Finally, as indicated by the main Hadith under discussion gaining and acting on knowledge is far superior to voluntary worship. This is because the majority of muslims do not understand the Arabic language and are therefore less likely to improve their behavior and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in a positive way as they do not understand the language they use to worship Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, learning and acting on knowledge is much more likely to inspire one to change for the better. This is the reason why some muslims spend decades performing voluntary worship yet, do not improve their behavior towards Allah, the

Exalted, or people in the slightest. This by far is not the best course of action.

In addition, one cannot worship nor obey Allah, the Exalted, in their daily activities nor fulfill the rights of people correctly without knowledge. The ignorant person will commit sins without realizing it, as they are not aware what actions are considered sins. An ignorant person often fails to perform good deeds with their full conditions and etiquettes, so their many acts of voluntary worship will be deficient. Whereas, the knowledgeable may perform less good deeds but they will perform them correctly thereby gaining more reward than the ignorant worshipper.

Five Questions

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2417, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person's feet will not move on Judgment Day until they answer five questions.

The first is about their life and what they did with it. This refers to the time given to a person. A muslim should understand that death often comes at an unexpected time. A muslim should not assume they will reach elderly age, as many die before this occurs. In reality, no matter what age one reaches, everyone admits that they life went by in a flash. A muslim should not believe they will obey Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers, when they reach elderly age, as this is wishful thinking. Even if one reaches this age, as they were too engrossed in the material world during their life, the change in their environment will have little positive effect on their character and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should instead utilize the time they have been granted instead of delaying by obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they obtain peace and success in both worlds, irrespective of how long they live. 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."

But the one who fails to utilize their time in the correct way will find that they waste it on vain things, which prevents them from obtaining peace and success in both worlds, as they did not use their resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Failing to use one's time correctly will also be a great regret on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the reward of those who utilized their time correctly.

The next question advised in the main Hadith under discussion will be about their knowledge and what they did with it. It is important for muslims to strive to acquire useful worldly and religious knowledge and more importantly act on it in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents, according to the teachings of Islam and in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, and fulfill the rights of people, correctly. The one who remains ignorant or fails to act on their knowledge is unlikely to achieve success in either worlds. A person will only reach their desired location when they first find the correct path and then journey down it. But if a person fails to locate the correct path meaning, obtain knowledge, or fails to journey down it, meaning, act on their knowledge,

they will not reach their desired destination meaning, success in both worldly and religious matters. Useful knowledge which is acted upon leads to all good, whereas, misusing knowledge leads to trouble in both worlds.

The third and fourth questions people will be asked on Judgment Day are about their wealth specifically, how they earned it and how they spent it. Firstly, muslims must ensure that they only obtain lawful wealth and avoid doubtful or unlawful wealth. Unlawful wealth only leads to the rejection of all of one's righteous deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. If one's foundation is based on the unlawful then everything coming from it will be considered unlawful and therefore rejected by Allah, the Exalted. The same way the internal foundation of Islam is one's intention, the external foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim is free to obtain lawful wealth and spend it on lawful things, such as fulfilling one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. Wealth can become a great blessing for a person in both worlds when it is obtained and spent correctly. But if it is not, it will become a great regret for them in both worlds. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, that the wealthy will have little good on the Day of Judgment, except for those who spent in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Before spending on vain things, one should reflect on losing out on the great reward which will be granted to those who spent their wealth correctly on Judgement Day. This will ensure they only spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoid sinful and vain expenditure.

The final question will be about one's body and how they used it. A muslim must therefore use every organ of their body, such as their sight and hearing, in the correct way, as prescribed by Islam. This is true

gratitude and therefore leads to further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

One must ensure they avoid evil and vain speech, as the latter will be a great regret on Judgement Day and as it often leads to evil speech. One should speak what is good or remain silent.

In addition, they must use their physical strength in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they reach a day when they lose it and are no longer able to perform righteous deeds. It is hoped that the one who uses their strength in the correct way will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their time of weakness. In fact, the one who uses their good health correctly will be granted the same reward when they fall sick, even if they do not perform the same good deeds anymore. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500.

Finally, a muslim must keep their physical and verbal harm away from the self and possessions of others, as this is a sign of a true muslim and believer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

Leaving Good Behind

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some righteous deeds which continue benefiting a muslim after their death namely, ongoing charity, useful knowledge and a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent.

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 of this 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 muslims to leave a lovely legacy behind, from which they and other people can gain benefit from. 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 and if it is righteous 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 benefit them after their death, 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.

The ongoing charity mentioned in the main Hadith includes anything from which the creation continues to benefit from, such as a water well. As long as the creation benefits from it the donor will continue to receive reward, even after their death.

Useful knowledge includes both worldly and religious knowledge which benefit people. According to the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3641, leaving useful knowledge behind is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. Therefore, Muslims must strive to concentrate on fulfilling this tradition instead of concentrating on leaving wealth and properties behind. This part of the main Hadith also encourages one to gain and act on beneficial knowledge, as one first needs to learn before they can teach others. If one struggles to learn and teach, then they should organize for someone else to learn and teach, such as sponsoring a student of knowledge. This will ensure they gain a full share of reward of any useful knowledge spread by this student of knowledge.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith can only be fulfilled when one raises their child according to Islamic teachings. Otherwise, they will not bother with supplicating on behalf of their deceased parents with sincerity. The best way one can achieve this is to lead by example. Meaning, a parent must learn and act on Islamic teachings and be a practical role model for their child to follow. The one who behaves in such a manner will find that their child becomes a blessing for them during their life and after their death, as their child will sincerely supplicate on their behalf regularly.

What is Cursed?

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that everything in this material world is cursed except the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, what is connected to it, the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge.

The remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, encompasses all the levels of remembrance. Namely, internal silent remembrance, which includes correcting one's intention so that they only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue, which is achieved by either speaking what is good or remaining silent. And the most important level is practically remembering Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who does this will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Anything which leads to the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, includes the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as striving in the material world in order to fulfill one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents, according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. In reality, this includes any action which appears worldly or religious, as long as it involves the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Both the knowledgeable person and the student of knowledge are the only people who will obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly, as this is not possible to achieve without knowledge. An ignorant person disobeys Allah, the Exalted, without even realizing it, as they are unaware of what counts as a sin or a righteous deed. In some cases, one may even believe they are strictly obeying Him even though they are far from it. The knowledgeable and the student of knowledge know how to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note that one must act on their knowledge with sincerity, knowledge without actions is not beneficial.

To conclude, in reality nothing is really cursed in the material world in itself. It is how a thing is used which determines if it is cursed or not. For example, if wealth is used correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, then it is a great blessing in both worlds. But if it is misused or hoarded then it will become a curse for its owner in both worlds. This can be applied to all things in this world.

Best and Worse Places

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit muslims from going to places other than the Mosques, nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings, over visiting the markets and other places, unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily, as they are places where sins more often occur. Whenever they do go to other places they must ensure they avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, which includes wronging others. They should avoid over socialising, as this is the cause of the majority of sins, which occur in society.

The Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like a student

benefits from a library, as it is an environment created for studying, similarly, muslims can benefit from Mosques, as their very purpose is to encourage muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly.

Mosques are also an excellent place to remind one of their purpose, which is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. The Mosques also encourage one to prioritise their activities in the correct way, so that they fulfill their necessities and responsibilities, prepare adequately for the hereafter and enjoy lawful pleasures in moderation. The one who avoids the Mosques often wastes their time and resources on vain and pointless activities and they therefore lose out on gaining benefit in both worlds.

Not only should a muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others, such as their children, to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

One of Us

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1921, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person is not one of the true muslims if they fail to show mercy to the young, respect the elders and command good and forbid evil.

All people irrespective of their faith, age or social status must be treated with respect and kindness. In fact, a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. And this undoubtedly includes being treated by others in a kind way. In addition, one cannot be a true Muslim or believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

Showing mercy to the young includes guiding them towards the obedience of Allah, the exalted, through 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. This will ensure they use the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Teaching the young must be done through leading by example, as this is the most effective way in guiding others especially, the youth. They should be encouraged to only accompany good people as a person adopts the negative or positive characteristics of their companions. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Finally, they should be shown that Islam is a simple and easy religion which allows them to have plenty of lawful fun. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4835. Being merciful to the young will teach them to also be merciful to others. The one who shows mercy to others will receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

Respecting elders includes being patient with them and not arguing with them. A muslim can disagree with elders but good manners and respect must be maintained at all times. They must be supported at all times which includes physical, emotional and financial support. It is important to note that showing respect to elders does not mean one should allow them to disobey Allah, the Exalted. One should object to evil in a respectful and kind manner and never let someone's age prevent them from doing so. This has been indicated in the last part of the main Hadith under discussion. Simply put, how one treats elders is how they will be treated by others if and when they become elderly.

Finally, a muslim must gently command good and forbid evil according to Islamic knowledge. Harshness often pushes people away from the truth. When possible, one should advise others in private, as doing so publicly can embarrass people. An embarrassed person is less likely to heed good advice. A muslim should continue with this duty whether it affects people or not, as this is not under their control. They will be rewarded for their sincere intention and efforts. One should never give up in this duty in respect to their dependents, as it is their duty to guide their dependents. Finally, one should strive to act on their own advice to the best of their ability, otherwise their advice to others will become ineffective.

Keeping Blessings

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality, the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a muslim does not use their blessings correctly, they will become a source of stress and punishment for them in both worlds, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors, then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will

enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly, then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or if their inheritor misuses the blessings then it will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings, as this was a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

A Muslim must remember that one's family and all the worldly blessings they hoarded will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514. Therefore, they must convert their worldly blessings into good deeds, by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they take them with them to their lonely grave.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam. Otherwise, they will lead a stressful life in this world, even if they possess the entire world, as Allah, the Exalted, the Controller of hearts, only grants peace of mind to those who use their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Him, and they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

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

Slaves of the World

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents, as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and pursue lawful yet unnecessary worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. This behaviour prevents them from obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience 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. This prevents them from using the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not, they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. 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 [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess, as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor, even if they possess much wealth. Whereas, the satisfied person is not greedy, meaning needy, and this makes them rich, even if they possess little of this world. A muslim should know that Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires, as this, in most cases, would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

A Good End

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 664, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that charity extinguishes the anger of Allah, the Exalted, and protects one against an evil death.

This charity includes both obligatory and voluntary charity. As mentioned in this Hadith, charity has a strong positive effect as wealth is often a beloved worldly thing to people. So when they give it up for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, by donating it to the needy, Allah, the Exalted, averts His anger from them, anger caused by their disobedience. When this occurs the person will become encompassed by the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which will guide them through the difficulties, temptations and tests they face in this world safely, so that when they reach their death, they die in submission to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, as a true muslim.

An evil death is when one dies without their faith. This can occur when one possesses weak faith, which is a result of their ignorance of Islamic knowledge. The more one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge, the stronger their faith will become. An evil death can also occur when one persists on major sins, such as abandoning the obligatory prayers. It does not take a scholar to conclude where this person will end up in the hereafter. It is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, that a generous person is close to Allah, the Exalted, close to people, close to Paradise and far from Hell.

A muslim should therefore make it their habit to donate charity regularly, according to their means, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality meaning, one's sincerity, not quantity. Even a date fruit given sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will earn a muslim reward greater in size than a mountain. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Finally, one must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Charity is a Shade

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

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

A muslim should therefore strive to give regular charity irrespective of its quantity as Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity, He judges actions based on quality, meaning, one's sincerity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

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

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

Therefore, this leaves muslims with no excuse in failing to regularly donate charity for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, hoping to gain a strong shade which protects them from the severe heat of a Great Day.

Finally, one must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Divine Blessings and Support

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1081, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims how to gain blessings in their provision, divine support and an improvement in their condition and state.

The first thing is to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted, before one dies. As the time of death is unknown, this Hadith actually indicates sincerely repenting whenever one commits a sin, meaning, repenting without delay. This consists of feeling regretful, seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the same or a similar sin again and, if possible, to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The next thing advised in the main Hadith is that a muslim must make use of their time before they become preoccupied with responsibilities, an illness or a difficulty. A muslim must utilise their resources, such as their time, on things which please Allah, the Exalted, and avoid vain and sinful things. One must remember the great regret they will face on Judgement Day when they observe the reward given to those who used their resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, if they failed to do the same. They must not postpone doing good to a time or day which they are not guaranteed to reach and even if they reach it, they may not be in the right position to do the good deed. It is hoped that the one who behaves in this manner will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, when they are no longer in a position to perform extra righteous deeds due to a change in circumstances. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in

Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. A Muslim must first aim to minimize using their time on things which do not benefit them in this world or the next. Next, they should try to reduce the things which only benefit them in this world and concentrate more on doing things which benefit them in the hereafter, which by definition, automatically benefits them in this world too. The one who remains steadfast on this will use their resources, such as their time, in the right way, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim must strengthen their bond with Allah, the Exalted, by remembering Him much. True remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, consists of three levels. The first is internal remembrance meaning, to correct one's intention so that they only act to please Him. This is proven when one does not expect nor hope from any return or gratitude from people. The second level consists of remembering Allah, the Exalted, by speaking good words and avoiding vain and sinful speech. And the highest level is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through one's actions by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This has been discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is giving much charity both hidden and open. This includes both the obligatory and voluntary charity. It is important to note, this means giving charity according to one's means, whether it is much or little. Allah, the Exalted, does not observe quantity, He observes and judges actions based on quality meaning, one's sincerity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. This leaves muslims with no excuses but to give charity according to their means. In addition, it is important to give charity regularly instead of once in a while, as regular deeds are more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, even if they are little. This has been

advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. Finally, those who desire to encourage others to give charity can give it publicly. This will lead to them gaining the same reward as those who donate because of their inspiration. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. But those who are fearful of showing off, which cancels their reward, should do so privately. Islam has provided many options and opportunities for muslims to gain much reward in order to obtain peace and success in both worlds. One must remember that charity includes all good deeds that help others, not just wealth. So the one who does not possess wealth, should give charity in other ways, such as giving others their time, energy and emotional support. The least one can do is keep their verbal and physical harm away from others, as this is considered as giving charity to oneself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Joining the Righteous

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person who imitates a people is counted as one of them.

All muslims irrespective of the strength of their faith desire to be counted and end up with the righteous in the next world. But this Hadith clearly warns that a muslim will only be considered a righteous person and end up with them if they imitate the righteous. This imitation is a practical thing not only a declaration through words. This imitation is correctly done by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 9:

"And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous."

But those who verbally declare their love for the righteous and fail to imitate them and instead imitate the characteristics found in hypocrites and the sinful will be considered and judged as one of them. This does not mean they will lose their faith but it means they will be judged as disobedient muslims. How can a disobedient muslim be counted as an

obedient muslim and end up with the righteous? This is only wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 58:

"And not equal are the blind and the seeing, nor are those who believe and do righteous deeds and the evildoer. Little do you remember."

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of befriending good people, as one is influenced, negatively or positively, by their companions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Therefore, if one desires to imitate the righteous, they should befriend them in this world. This company and imitation will increase the love one has for the righteous. This real love unites one with their beloved in the hereafter. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

The Best Human

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds. This has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them, as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, by avoiding bad company and the places which sins occur more often. They should gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they adopt the characteristics

which prevent sins, such as steadfastness, patience and the fear of Allah, the Exalted. They should learn how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, so that they avoid using them in sinful ways. And whenever a sin happens to occur they must immediately sincerely repent, as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without giving up.

Backbiting and Slander

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6593, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained the meaning of backbiting and slander.

Backbiting is when one criticizes someone in their absence in a way which would be displeasing to them, even though it is the truth. Whereas, slander is similar to backbiting except that the statement is not true. These sins mainly involve speech but can include other things, such as using hand signals. These are both major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of the corpse of one's brother, in the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it...”

It is important to understand that these sins are worse than most of the sins which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted. This is because the sins between a person and Allah, the Exalted, will be forgiven by Him, if the sinner sincerely repents. But Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive a backbiter or a slanderer until their victim forgives them first. If they do not, then on Judgment Day the good deeds of the backbiter/slanderer will be given to their victim as compensation and if needed, the sins of the victim will be given to their backbiter/slanderer until justice is established. This may well cause the backbiter/slanderer

to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Backbiting is only lawful when one is warning and protecting another person from harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another person with a third party, such as a legal case.

One should avoid backbiting and slandering by firstly gaining knowledge on the evil consequences of these major sins. Secondly, a person should only utter words which they would happily say in front of the person, full well knowing they would not take it in an offensive way. Thirdly, a muslim should only utter words about another if they would not mind someone else saying those or similar words about them. Meaning, they should talk about others how they want people to talk about them. Finally, a muslim should concentrate on fixing their own faults and when done sincerely, it will prevent them from backbiting and slandering others.

One should avoid the company of backbiters and slanderers, as they are trouble makers, who will, sooner or later, backbite or slander them. They should gently warn others from these major sins, as long as they are safe from physical harm. They should never believe the gossip spoken about others, as the vast majority of gossip is either completely false or it is mixed up with many lies. One should instead defend the honour of others, just like they would like people to defend their honour in their absence. The one who behaves in this manner will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931. One should ignore the gossip they hear about others and never let it influence their behaviour towards them.

Instead, they should fulfill the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam.

A Muslim must never be fooled by the fact that backbiting and slandering others has become normalized in society. The sins of others will never reduce the severity of one's sins in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, nor can the sins of others justify committing sins. This is a foolish attitude which a worldly judge would not even accept, then how can a Muslim expect Allah, the Exalted, the Judge of judges, to accept it?

Safe Passage to Paradise

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1855, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some characteristics which will cause a muslim to enter Paradise in peace.

The first is to sincerely worship Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will cause one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the true meaning of obeying Allah, the Exalted. Obedience extends beyond worshipping Allah, the Exalted, through practices and rituals.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is to feed others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This is a great deed which leads to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and a great reward. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verses 9-11:

"We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful." So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness."

In addition, the one who feeds others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be fed the fruits of Paradise on Judgment Day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449. Finally, a muslim should strive to give all forms of charity regularly, according to their means, irrespective of its quantity, as Allah, the Exalted, judges quality meaning, one's intention. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is spreading the Islamic greeting of peace to others. A muslim should fulfill the true meaning of this righteous deed by extending peace to all through their actions and words. It is hypocritical to offer the Islamic greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through one's actions and speech.

A true muslim and believer must keep their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others, irrespective of their faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It includes aiding others according to one's means, such as emotional or physical support. The one who behaves in such a manner will be provided with support from Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Simply put, a muslim should treat others how they desire to be treated by people through their speech and actions.

A Special Deed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The righteousness mentioned in the verse quoted earlier is connected to fasting, as fasting reduces one's evil desires and passions. It prevents

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

As briefly indicated earlier, there are different levels of fasting. The first and lowest level of fasting is when one abstains from the things which will break their fast, such as food. The next level is abstaining from sins which damage one's fast thereby reducing the reward of their fast, such as lying. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. Fasting which involves each member of the body is the next level. This is when each body part fasts from sins for example, the eyes from looking at the unlawful, the ears from listening to the unlawful and so on. The next level is when one behaves in this manner even when they are not fasting. Finally, the highest level of fasting is abstaining from all things which are not connected to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, one avoids using the blessings they have been granted, such as their time, in ways which are sinful or vain.

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

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

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

The Servant Allah, the Exalted, Loves

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength, in order to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people unnecessarily, as this habit leads to dependence on them and it reduces one's trust in Allah, the Exalted. One should firmly believe that no matter what happens, whatever is destined to be their provision was allocated

to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A muslim should focus on using their resources, such as their physical strength, and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them. From a religious point of view, one can become incorrectly dependent on others when they believe that a person, such as a religious and spiritual teacher, will suffice them in gaining success in both worlds through their supplications and intercession. This attitude only encourages laziness, as one believes they are free to behave how they wish and will still achieve success in both worlds through their spiritual teacher. A Muslim must avoid this misguidance and instead follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet worked hard in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This is the correct attitude which must be adopted.

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being anonymous. This means a muslim should not strive in worldly or religious matters in order to obtain fame or prominence. This attitude can lead to many sins, such as showing off, which leads to the destruction of one's reward. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that seeking fame is more destructive to one's religion than two wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. Instead, a muslim should strive to fulfill their duties and if they gain prominence, they must maintain sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, without altering their obedience to Him in order to please people, as this leads to destruction in both worlds.

Joking

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cursed, three times, the one who lies in order to make people laugh.

Joking while sticking to the truth is not a sin but it is difficult to do consistently. The one who jokes excessively will eventually slip up and utter words which are sinful, such as lying, backbiting or mocking others. Therefore, it is safer to avoid joking excessively, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1995. In addition, the one who jokes excessively even if they manage to always speak the truth and not offend anyone, will encounter a spiritual disease which has been warned of in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4193, namely, a spiritually dead heart. This occurs to the person who jokes and laughs excessively, as this mentality demands they always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if one avoids thinking and discussing them, they will never correctly prepare for them. This lack of preparation will cause their spiritual heart to die. In fact, the more seriously one ponders over the hereafter the less they will laugh and joke. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6486.

Joking too often also causes others to lose respect for them. This can cause many problems, such as not being taken seriously when they command good and forbid evil, even if it is to their own children.

Excessively joking often leads to enmity between people, as one can easily take things seriously. This leads to fractured and broken relationships. In fact, many people often end up physically and emotionally hurt because of jokes. The vast majority of arguments and fights amongst people in society begin as jokes.

In addition, when joking one should avoid laughing loudly or full-mouthed, as this is disliked in Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, laugh was a smile, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6092.

A muslim should avoid lying at all costs even when joking, as this would lead to them obtaining a house in the middle of Paradise. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4800.

This does not mean a muslim should not joke at all. Joking from time to time while avoiding sins, such as lying, is acceptable as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, occasionally joked. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1990. It is joking excessively which is disliked and sinful if it is related to a sin. It is a sin to intentionally misinterpret a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to fulfil one's own desires. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, rarely joked without committing any sins, then muslims should do the same and not exceed the bounds in order to fulfil their own desires.

In addition, there is a big difference between being cheerful with people, such as smiling, and joking excessively. Being cheerful is a blessing of Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 301. Even smiling to make others feel comfortable is recorded as an act of charity according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1970. So one should not believe avoiding joking excessively means that people should always be in a sad and depressed mood.

False Oaths

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2673, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who acts as a false witness in order to unlawfully take the possessions of others, will meet Allah, the Exalted, while He is angry with them.

It is important to note, this applies to taking the possessions of all people, irrespective of their faith. This will be the outcome even if one obeys Allah, the Exalted, in other aspects of their life, such as offering the obligatory prayers. Unfortunately, this commonly occurs especially, in third world countries, where muslims file false claims in a legal court in order to take something which does not belong to them, such as wealth and properties. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2654, it is one of the greatest of major sins. In fact, this Hadith places perjury next to polytheism and disobedience to parents. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has done the same in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 30:

“...So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement.”

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2373, gives a severe warning to a person who does not sincerely repent from being a false witness. If they fail to repent they will not move on the Day of Judgment until Allah, the Exalted, sends them to Hell. In fact, the one who acts as a false witness in order to take something which they have no right to

will be sent to Hell even if the thing they took was a twig of a tree. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353.

Being a false witness is such a serious sin as it includes many other terrible sins, such as lying. The false witness commits a sin against the person who they are testifying against. This sin will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until the victim forgives them first. If they do not, the false witness's good deeds will be given to the victim and if necessary the sins of the victim will be given to the false witness in order to establish justice on Judgement Day. This may well cause the false witness to be hurled into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. The false witness also commits a sin if they testify on someone else's behalf so that the latter can take something which they have no right to. This attitude clearly challenges the command of the Holy Quran which advises muslims to not aid each other in evil but instead help each other in good things. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

The false witness will also commit further sins by using something which has become unlawful because of the way it was obtained. For example, if a person obtained wealth in this manner and then gave it in charity it would be rejected and recorded as a sin, as Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. In fact, anything they do with the wealth will be absent of grace and a sin as it was obtained unlawfully.

It is a duty on all muslims to always speak the truth whether it is in normal everyday conversations or under an oath in a legal court case. Lying in all forms leads to sins which in turn lead to Hell. The one who continues lying will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to work out what is most likely to happen to someone on Judgment Day who has been labelled a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Finally, taking the possessions of others unlawfully, through a legal court case or by other means, must be avoided, as this contradicts the character of a true Muslim and believer. The true Muslim and believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from people and their possessions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. One must treat people and their possessions in the same way they desire people to treat them and their possessions.

Good Behaviour

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1977, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against adopting characteristics that are not found in a true believer.

The first negative characteristic is insulting the honor of others. A true believer does not harm the honor of others through their speech or physical actions. Allah, the Exalted, has made the honor of Muslims sacred just like their lives and possessions are sacred. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3933. The same way a true believer would not harm the self or possessions of others they must not dishonor others either. In fact, a believer is the one who protects the honor of others when they are being violated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, that whoever protects the honor of others, Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from the fire of Hell. One must instead talk about and treat others in a way they desire people to talk about and treat them.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true believer does not curse. This is an evil habit as one is supplicating for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone. This contradicts the teachings of Islam and the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, when he was requested to curse the non-Muslims of Mecca he replied that he was not sent by Allah, the Exalted, as a curser, but as a mercy to mankind. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 321. In addition, the one who supplicates for the mercy

of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from others will most likely have it removed from them, as this contradicts the behaviour of a true believer. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4905, that the curse returns back to the one who uttered it, if the person or thing they cursed does not deserve it and in most cases they do not. Therefore, Muslims should not overlook this sin and ensure they do not curse things as this is not a sign of a true believer. They should instead supplicate for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to descend on all. This will lead to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, descending on them. One will be treated according to how they treat others. If one curses others, they will be cursed but if they treat others with mercy, then they will be treated with mercy. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7376.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is committing immoral sins. This includes all minor and major sins between oneself and Allah, the Exalted, such as neglecting the obligatory prayer, and the sins between a person and others, such as backbiting. These sins are against the recognized standards of good behaviour. And it can also refer to those sins that are committed openly. These are worse than secret sins, as they encourage others to follow and commit evil deeds. This is the reason why sins of the tongue, such as backbiting, have become an acceptable practice in most societies, as it is committed in public for example, through social media. The one who commits evil deeds will bear the burden of their own sins as well as the sins they inspire others to commit. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. If good conduct will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgement Day, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can estimate the evilness of immorality. Generally speaking, sins associated with immorality have always been regarded as evil by all societies. One must not only abstain from immoral sins but also avoid bad company and the places where these sins more often take place. They should remain firm on this and encourage others, such as their dependents, to do the same.

The last characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true believer is not foul. Meaning, they do not behave practically in a foul way by committing sins against others and they are not foul in language. Unfortunately, this evil characteristic has become very common amongst people who claim to have purified hearts yet, are extremely foul especially, in their language. This contradicts their declaration as what is inside reflects outwardly. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. Finally, it is extremely important to avoid foul behaviour especially, foul language, as it only takes a single evil word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. One must remember that foul speech often leads to foul actions, therefore it is vital for one to control their speech, so that they only speak good or remain silent, and guard their actions, so that they only use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The Real Pilgrimage

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage, this will occur at the time of their death, when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, remain with them.

When a muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage, they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This muslim will return home a changed person, as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a shopping trip as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind muslims of their final journey to the hereafter, a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter. The one who behaves in this manner will be led to Paradise by their Holy Pilgrimage.

Becoming the Best

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated some important characteristics for muslims to adopt.

The first is that the best worshipper is the one who avoids the unlawful. This includes avoiding all forms of verbal and physical sins. It includes fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as abandoning them is unlawful. It includes avoiding using the blessings one has been granted in sinful ways. In addition, a muslim must never obtain and utilize unlawful provision, such as wealth, as this will cause all of their righteous deeds to be rejected, as the foundation of good deeds must be lawful. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim should avoid doubtful things, as this often leads to the unlawful. Avoiding what creates doubt will safeguard one's faith and honor. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. When one behaves in this manner, all their righteous worship and good deeds will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich, even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace, which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased with what they have been granted will not obtain this grace. This will cause them to feel as if their possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body, even if they have the world at their feet.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant, even if they do not observe the wisdoms behind His choice. 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.”

If a muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will be provided with peace of mind.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the sign of a true believer is being kind to their neighbour. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once connected belief in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgment Day to treating a neighbour kindly. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 174. This Hadith alone is enough to indicate the seriousness of failing to treat neighbours kindly. A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, warns that a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and offered much voluntary worship would go to Hell because she mistreated her neighbours through her speech. If this is the case for the one who harms their neighbour through words can one imagine the seriousness of physically harming one's neighbour? Kindness involves aiding them in what is good, according to one's means, such as financial, emotional and physical help. They must keep their verbal and physical harm away from them. A believer must avoid doing anything which could cause disruption and discomfort to their neighbours e.g. loud noise.

They must be patient and pardon their neighbours, as long as they do not cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. Simply put, one must treat their neighbour in a way they desire their neighbours to treat them.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a true muslim loves for others what they love for themselves. It is important to show this practically, not just declare it through words. A muslim must strive to aid others according to their means, such as emotional and physical help, just like they desire others to help them. This will cause them to obtain the support of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Just like a person desires to succeed in both worldly and religious matters, one must aid others practically in achieving this also. The same way a muslim would like their self and possessions to be safe from the verbal and physical

harm of others, which is the characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, a muslim must treat others in the same way. Behaving in this manner eliminates many negative characteristics, such as envy, enmity and spite and encourages one to adopt positive characteristics, such as gentleness, compassion and tolerance.

The last thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that too much laughter kills the spiritual heart. This mentality demands one to always think and discuss funny issues and avoid serious issues. The matter of preparing for death and the hereafter are serious issues and if one avoids thinking about and discussing them then they will never correctly prepare for them. This will lead to a dead spiritual heart. A Muslim must be cheerful and optimistic in order to make others feel comfortable but they should avoid adopting a constant joking attitude, as this attitude leads to vain and even sinful things.

Means to Salvation

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2406, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised how to achieve salvation.

The first thing is to control one's speech. A muslim should avoid evil speech, as only a single evil word is needed to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. A muslim should avoid vain and useless speech as it is often the first step to evil speech and it wastes one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day. A muslim should strive to either speak good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. When one behaves in this manner, even their silence is counted as a good deed.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a person should not leave their home unnecessarily. Behaving in this manner leads to wasting time and both verbal and physical sins. If one truly and sincerely reflects, they will realize that the majority of their sins and the problems they encountered were due to unnecessarily socializing with others. This does not mean it was always the fault of others but it means if one avoids unnecessarily leaving their home, they would sin less and encounter less problems and difficulties. This would also free up their time to learn and act on useful knowledge, such as Islamic knowledge, which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life. Socializing unnecessarily wastes the unique blessing of time, which never returns after it passes. Those who wasted their time on vain and sinful things will face stress in this world and a great regret on

Judgement Day, especially when they witness the reward of those who utilized their time correctly. In addition, socializing unnecessarily also hinders a person from fulfilling their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. It also prevents one from the important task of self-reflection. This is needed in order to ensure one is heading in the right direction in life and whether or not they are completing their responsibilities and duties. A lack of self-reflection leads to an aimless life whereby a person has no firm direction in their worldly or religious life. Over socializing also encourages one to become dependent and clingy to people, and this always leads to emotional, mental and social problems, as one's whole life, their happiness and sadness, all revolves around people and their relationships. One can save themselves from all these negative effects by only socializing when it is necessary.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to weep over one's sins. This behaviour shows genuine remorse over one's sins, which is a crucial aspect of sincere repentance. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4252. The other aspects include seeking forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, unless this will lead to further trouble. Making a firm promise not to commit the same or similar sin again and where possible, make up for any rights which have been missed or violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Islam does not demand perfection, only a genuine and sincere effort to obey Allah, the Exalted, and when one sins to sincerely repent and strive hard to reform themselves.

Thinking Things Through

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on, as muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly and religious matters.

Even though, a muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments, difficulties and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Hasten to Actions

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2306, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to hasten in performing righteous deeds before seven things occur.

The first is overwhelming poverty. This can refer to financial difficulties which distract a person from 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. In addition, stressing over wealth can even push one towards the unlawful. A muslim should remember that any righteous deed rooted in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Allah, the Exalted, has allocated provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, a muslim should trust that their lawful provision will reach them as long as they continue to strive for it in lawful ways, according to the teachings of Islam. A muslim should remember that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants according to His infinite wisdom. He does not give according to someone's desires, as this will most likely lead to their destruction. 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."

And chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills...”

Finally, this part of the Hadith also indicates the importance of using one's excess wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before a time comes when they may want to give charity but may not be in the right financial position to do so.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should hasten in performing righteous deeds before they become distracted by wealth. Wealth itself is not evil but depending on how one obtains it and uses it can either make it a great blessing for them or a great burden for them in both worlds. If a muslim strives to obtain excess wealth while neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people and hoard or misspend their wealth, it will become a great curse for them in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

But if a muslim obtains enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and uses their blessings, such as wealth, in other ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then they will achieve true richness in both worlds. 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."

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a debilitating sickness. This is a warning to make use of one's good health before they encounter sickness. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess, by striving to gain success in both worldly and religious matters, while giving priority to religion over the world. For example, a muslim should use their good health to journey to the Mosques regularly in order to offer their obligatory prayers with the congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. The amazing thing about utilizing one's good health correctly is that when a muslim eventually loses it, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their time of good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness and fail to utilise their good health will receive no reward during their good health or when they fall sick.

This is connected to the next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion namely, senility. A muslim should make use of their youth and strong intelligence before they reach senility. This includes gaining and acting on knowledge and using one's mental strength to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One should not delay in this by believing they can learn and act on Islamic knowledge when they are older as there is no guarantee they will reach older age. In addition, even if they do reach elderly age, it will be difficult for them to learn Islamic knowledge, as the prime age to learn is when one is younger. Finally, even if they manage to gain Islamic knowledge in older age, it will be harder for them to implement the knowledge, as older people become more easily accustomed to their habits and they therefore find it harder to change their behaviour positively. Therefore, one must not delay using their mental strength to learn and act on useful knowledge while they are younger. Finally, it is important to behave in this manner before senility occurs, as even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sought refuge from senility in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6390.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion which prevents righteous actions is a sudden death. Death is certain but the time is unknown. A muslim should not live in heedlessness believing that their death is far away, as countless people have and will die long before reaching their life expectancy. Nor should they live in such a way as if they are not going to die at all. Having hopes of a long life can be considered the root of all evil, as it causes one to delay performing righteous deeds, believing they can always perform them tomorrow. It causes them to delay sincere repentance, as they believe they have plenty of time to change for the better. And having hopes for a long life

causes one to prioritize obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, in order to make their expected long life on this Earth comfortable. These things prevent one from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Muslims should therefore reduce their hope for a long life so that they change for the better and direct their focus to the permanent hereafter. Muslims should not delay and instead act today as the tomorrow they hope for may never arrive. A wise person does not prioritize preparing for a day they may never reach, such as their retirement, over practically preparing for the day which they are guaranteed to experience, such as the day they will die. In addition, they should also strive to perform the righteous deeds which will benefit them in case their life ends unexpectedly, such as an ongoing charity, which benefits the donor, as long as the charity continues to benefit others. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the arrival of the anti-Christ. This event will prevent one from performing righteous deeds and instead tempt them towards disbelief. One lesson to learn from this is the importance of avoiding doubtful things. Just like a person who journeys close to a border is more likely to cross it, similarly, a muslim who is surrounded by temptations will more likely be led astray and fail to perform righteous deeds. The one who avoids places and things which tempt them to commit sins will protect their faith and honor. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. Muslims should therefore guard their faith by avoiding things, places and the people who invite or tempt them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and ensure their dependents, such as their children, do the same.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, which prevents one from performing righteous deeds, is the Final Hour.

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

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

This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Whoever responds positively to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world, will not find peace in this world and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet, which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur,

sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable, it makes sense that one responds to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless, no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

All Difficulties

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except that Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins, as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand, as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience, instead it is only acceptance, which naturally occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life, as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties, they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The one who faces every difficulty with patience, which involves avoiding complaining or disobeying Allah, the Exalted, through speech or actions, and adds sincere repentance to their behaviour, will have both their minor and major sins erased. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and the people who have been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, sincerely promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and it includes, making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The one who faces difficulties in this manner and faces times of ease with gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will find peace and success in every situation they face in both worlds. 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."

Never Full

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6439, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that if a person possessed a valley of gold, they would desire another and nothing fills their stomach except dust. But Allah, the Exalted, forgives those who repent to Him.

This Hadith warns against possessing too many worldly desires. The problem with them, even if they are lawful, is that fulfilling one desire only leads to more. One door leads to ten others. And this never ends unless one repents from this behaviour or when they die and the dust of their grave finally fills their stomach. Lawful worldly desires can also lead to unlawful desires, as many people who ended up in the unlawful began by indulging in lawful desires. The more desires a person has, the more needy they become, which is another name for being poor. This poverty never ends, irrespective of how much one obtains or how many desires they fulfill. It is why it has been said that the essential needs of a pauper gets fulfilled, as this is guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, but the desires of kings are left unfulfilled. A muslim should instead strive in this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. And they should minimize their worldly desires in order to avoid this real poverty and instead seek peace and comfort with the Controller of hearts and emotions, namely, Allah, the Exalted, through His sincere obedience, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. 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."

It does not take a scholar to conclude that those who are obsessed with fulfilling their lawful or unlawful desires, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, never find peace, irrespective of how many worldly possessions they own. In fact, those who behave in this manner are the furthest from peace of mind and are the closest to anxiety, stress and depression and are the most addicted to drugs and alcohol. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

The Fortunate

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2520, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the characteristics of a fortunate person.

The first characteristic is that they act on their useful knowledge. Knowledge is only beneficial when one acts on it, otherwise it is something which will testify against them on Judgment Day. Not acting on one's knowledge and expecting to obtain success is as foolish as the one who possesses a map to their desired destination yet does not use it and still hopes to reach their destination safely. It is vital for muslims to fulfill both aspects of knowledge. The first is gaining it from a reliable source and the second is to sincerely act on it for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must find the path to Paradise and journey down it in order to reach it.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is spending one's excess wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Excess wealth is the wealth which remains after one fulfills their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. A muslim should save reasonably for the near future and then spend the rest in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as charity. They should not spend it on vain or sinful things or hoard it. Hoarding wealth in reality makes it useless, as this practice defies the very purpose of its creation. Wealth which circulates in society is beneficial to all whereas hoarding only widens the gap between the rich and the poor. And it in reality does not benefit its owner, as they failed to enjoy it during their life yet will be held accountable for it in the hereafter. A muslim should either avoid

obtaining excess wealth or at least use it in the correct way. In addition, this advice applies to all of one's blessings, meaning, one must strive to use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoid using them on vain or sinful things. Vain things only lead to wasting one's precious resources and it will be a great regret for them on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the reward given to those who utilised their blessings correctly. Finally, vain and sinful things only lead to stress and trouble in both worlds, as this causes one to forget Allah, the Exalted, as truly remembering Him involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is withholding excess words. Evil words must always be avoided. Vain and useless words should also be avoided, as they often lead to evil words. In addition, one must understand that the majority of problems, difficulties and arguments a person encounters are caused by unnecessary words and conversations. A muslim should therefore either speak good or remain silent, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

"No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward."

Glad Tidings

In a Hadith found in Imam Munzari's, Awareness and Apprehension, number 2556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings to the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them, even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others, believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. They understand that all the worldly blessings they possess, belong to and were created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they have nothing to be proud of. In addition, they understand that doing good deeds is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, opportunity, strength and ability to do a good deed all come from Allah, the Exalted. In addition, only a fool adopts pride as one does not know their final outcome or the final outcome of others. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them and even in a state of disbelief. Understanding these truths will prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themselves if necessary and stand up for the truth nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored in the eyes of others.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is spending wealth without being disobedient to Allah, the Exalted, and to aid the weak and needy. This includes any spending which derives real benefit in this world or the next. It includes spending on fulfilling one's needs and the needs of one's dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending in this way is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. This correct spending encompasses all of the worldly blessings one has been granted and involves using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Aiding the needy includes all types of aid and support, such as financial, emotional and physical help. The one who aids others in this way will obtain the support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1930. The one who gains this cannot fail, as the help of Allah, the Exalted, overcomes all things. One must always remain sincere in their deeds by only performing them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is proven when one does not hope for nor demand any gratitude from people. One should aid others just like they desire others to aid them.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is socializing with scholars and the wise. A muslim should always choose their companions wisely as they will undoubtedly adopt the characteristics of their companions whether positive or negative. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. When one accompanies and follows the footsteps of the righteous they will not only adopt pious characteristics but it will prove their love for them. And this will cause them to end up with the righteous in the hereafter. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari,

number 3688. If one honestly reflects, they will understand that the majority of the difficulties, problems and arguments they have encountered was the result of socialising. These problems can be drastically reduced when one socialises with the correct people. In fact, socialising with the righteous will aid one in adopting the correct attitude and behaviour so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. A muslim should accompany the righteous and the wise otherwise seek seclusion, as safety lies in this especially, in this day and age.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is earning lawful provision. It is important to understand that if the foundation of someone's life is based in the unlawful then anything build on top of it will be impure. The righteous deeds, such as charity, of the one who obtains and utilizes the unlawful will be rejected. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. The same way the internal foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly, the outer foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful. A muslim should understand that their provision, which includes wealth, was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation can never change, so there is no need to obtain and utilize the unlawful, as this leads to difficulties in this world, as everything they obtain through the unlawful will become a source of stress for them, and it leads to a severe punishment on a Great Day. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is behaving righteously, even when one is in private and away from the observation of others. This muslim becomes fully aware that the divine vision is constantly observing their inner and outer being. This proves their sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as they behave righteously even when they are hidden from the sight of people. As these muslims have gained and acted on Islamic knowledge and strived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they have obtained excellence of faith. This is when one acts, such as offering the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, observing them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. This prevents them from bothering about the sight of people, as they are too focused and vigilant over the divine vision. This sincerity is important to adopt so that one only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, and maintains their sincere obedience to Him even in private.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is possessing public noble character. Meaning, this muslim displays noble character to all people, irrespective of their faith, as they understand that a true muslim and believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. They prove their love of desiring for others what they desire for themselves through actions, not just words, as this practical implementation is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They not only act righteously towards Allah, the Exalted, as mentioned in the last characteristic but also show noble character to the creation, as they are aware a true believer fulfills both halves of faith, namely, one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and showing good character to the creation. The one who fails to show good character to people, which involves treating others how one desires to be treated by people, will find that on Judgement Day they will be forced

to hand their good deeds over to those who they wronged and if necessary, they will take the sins of the people they wronged. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to avoid the mischief of evil people. This means they fulfill the important duty of helping others in good things and refuse to aid them in bad things, irrespective of who is taking part or organizing the thing. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Unfortunately, many muslims fail in this important duty by choosing to help or not to help others depending on who is doing something, instead of observing what they are doing. This has even affected scholars and Islamic institutions, who often only support those they have a relationship with. This must change if muslims desire to regain the social strength and influence the righteous predecessors possessed, as they always fulfilled this duty, irrespective of the people organizing or leading the good thing. Finally, this part of the Hadith also warns against bad companions and the places which are more associated with sins. Bad companions only encourage one to adopt bad characteristics and to develop blind loyalty, which often encourages one to support and take part in evil activities.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the fortunate person is the one who acts according to their knowledge. This is important to do as ignoring one's knowledge and acting contrary to it is a sign of great ignorance. This type of knowledge is not beneficial at all. In fact, it will only testify against a person on Judgment Day. Knowledge is only useful when it is correctly acted on, just like a map only leads to the desired destination when it is used. Failing to act on knowledge will not take one down the path to Paradise, it will only leave them in darkness; confused and lost.

Avenues of Good

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some easy righteous deeds to perform.

The first righteous deed is to help someone in their specific trade, according to one's means. For example, a muslim can support someone in their profession by paying for their further education or any fees connected to their profession. Helping in this way is in fact a great way of supporting an entire family, as helping a person who earns to support their family is indirectly supporting the family, even though it is far cheaper and easier than actually supporting the entire family. In addition, the donor will continue to gain reward, even after their death, as long as the person is benefitting from the donor's support while working in their trade.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should help someone who does not have a profession. This can include advising them on the best thing to do in order to obtain lawful wealth, paying for their education or encouraging business owners to hire them. This includes anything which aids this type of person to obtain lawful provision so that they can fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This is an important good deed as the one who does not have a lawful occupation is more likely to seek wealth through unlawful means, such as crimes. Helping people to obtain a lawful profession therefore reduces crimes and poverty within society. This benefits everyone within the society.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, which all muslims are capable of doing, is keeping their harm away from others, as this is an act of charity to oneself, as it saves them from punishment. In fact, keeping one's verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others is the very definition of a true muslim and believer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It includes treating others in the same way one desires others to treat them. Simply put, the one who leaves others in peace will be granted peace and reward. The muslim who adds to this behaviour by benefiting others, according to their means, even if it is only a good word of encouragement, will gain reward on top of reward, and this leads to success in both worlds. Finally, keeping one's harm away from others is important, as justice will be established on Judgement Day. The one who wronged others will be forced to hand over their good deeds to those who they wronged, and if necessary, they will take the sins of those they wronged. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Never Fooled Twice

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them, they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

A true believer does not blindly trust people thereby increasing the chances of being wronged by them. But if they are fooled by anyone, they should overlook and pardon, as this leads to their forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

But they should also change their behaviour by treading cautiously when dealing with this person in the future, thereby ensuring they do not get fooled again. There is a vast difference between forgiving others and blindly trusting them especially, after they have wronged someone.

In addition, this Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life, as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, the main Hadith eliminates the incorrect notion of forgiving and forgetting. As mentioned earlier, forgiving others is an important part of Islam but forgetting only opens the door for people to wrong them again. Humans cannot erase their memories and nor should they. Instead, one should forgive others, strive to fulfill the rights of others according to the teachings of Islam but tread cautiously when dealing with people, especially those who have wronged them in the past, to ensure history does not repeat itself.

Financial Advice

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1427, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave some advice relating to wealth.

The first thing is that the upper hand is better than the lower hand. This means that the one who strives to give their obligatory and voluntary charity, according to their means, is superior to the one who gives less and instead takes things, such as wealth, from others. This Hadith does not criticize the needy, as they are entitled to take from others to fulfill their needs. But it criticizes those who are capable of giving but withhold and those who do not need to take things from others yet, still ask and take them. A muslim should give according to their means, irrespective of its size, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality meaning, one's sincerity, not quantity. Every atom's worth of good will be recorded and rewarded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

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

And muslims should only ask and take things from others if they really need them. Otherwise, they should abstain from asking too much, as this leads to one becoming dependent on other people and losing trust in Allah, the Exalted. One should use the resources they have been granted according to the teachings of Islam, such as their physical

strength, and rely on Allah, the Exalted, to fulfil their needs. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

"And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register."

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim must first spend on their own necessities and the necessities of their dependents before donating charity. This is not only a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006, but it is also sinful to fail in striving in lawful ways to fulfill the needs of one's dependents, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2312.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the best charity is when one donates after fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance and without putting themselves into financial difficulty. Islam teaches muslims not to donate all their wealth but to donate regularly according to their means in a balanced way. Quality and consistency of deeds are more important than the quantity of deeds.

Paradise and Hell

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2559, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell is surrounded by desires.

This means the path which leads to Paradise contains difficulties and hardships. In most cases, a person cannot obtain good in this world without going through some sort of difficulty, such as exerting one's energy, then how can one believe they can obtain Paradise without facing difficulties? If one turns the pages of history they will observe the righteous always faced difficulties but as they knew the path of Paradise contained difficulties they maintained their focus on the destination instead of the difficulties. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that no one had been tested more than him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2472. Therefore, muslims must realize the fact that facing some difficulties in this world is an extremely small price to pay to obtain the permanent bliss of Paradise. Therefore, they should constantly focus on the destination, in every time of ease, so that they adopt gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and focus on the destination, in every time of difficulty, by adopting patience, which involves avoiding complaining and maintaining sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through speech and actions.

The path to Hell is full of desires. This indicates the importance of maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, at all times by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny

with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful pleasures in this world, a muslim should minimize these as much as possible as these lawful desires often lead to unlawful desires. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who behaves in such a manner will safeguard their faith and honor. A muslim should never obey their desires or the desires of others if it means they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the pleasure of fulfilling desires vanishes quickly whereas the regret and the potential punishment will last long.

To conclude, a desire fulfilled will not make one feel better if they end up in Hell. And a difficulty one faces will not make them feel bad if they end up in Paradise.

The Most Virtuous

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1660, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the two most virtuous people. The first is the one who sincerely strives in the way of Allah, the Exalted.

This includes striving against one's own evil desires and the evil desires of others and instead remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes fulfilling one's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, as described and one's duties towards people for example, striving in this material world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And it includes gently commanding good and forbidding evil according to Islamic knowledge. This will ensure one uses all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. A muslim will not fulfill this Hadith until they fulfill both aspects of their duties.

The second person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the one who secludes themselves from society thereby, keeping their evil away from people and remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim is not allowed to behave in this manner if they possess dependents, as neglecting them is a sin. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692.

In addition, one should not avoid people in order to be safe from their evil, they should instead do so to keep their own evil away from people. As the former attitude can lead to pride, where a person begins to believe they are righteous while all others are sinful. It is important to remember that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take someone to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Reducing socializing with people can lead to great good as it reduces the chances of a muslim committing sins through their speech and actions. It prevents one from facing many arguments, difficulties and problems, which are mainly caused by socializing unnecessarily. It will free their time up to concentrate more on their duties and responsibilities. It gives them more time to learn and act on Islamic knowledge, which leads to true and lasting success in both worlds. Benefits might be obtained by interacting with people but in this day and age, it is far safer to avoid socializing unnecessarily.

Prison and Paradise

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2324, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world is like a prison for the believer and a Paradise for the non-believer.

Muslims have been commanded to live by a specific code namely, to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This duty also includes treating the creation in a way one desires others to treat them. Because of this code, muslims are under constant supervision and fully believe that every deed is recorded and will be judged on the Day of Resurrection. Because of this fact a muslim rejects their evil and vain desires in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They continue in this way until they are released from this prison and reach the eternal bliss of the hereafter.

On the other hand, a non-muslim does not live by this code and instead indulges in their desires so this world becomes like a Paradise for them, whereby they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves. But if they die in this state, the hereafter will become their eternal prison.

Therefore, a muslim should make their life easier by adhering to the rules of this world until they are released. But if they keep breaking them they will only face one hardship after another, just like a prisoner faces hardship if they keep breaking the rules of their prison.

But it is important to note, this does not mean a muslim's life is bad. It only means they are constantly being observed and must live by a code in order to succeed, they must use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The truth is that the one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, correctly will find peace of mind and body even if outwardly they appear to be in a difficulty. This is because Allah, the Exalted, the Controller of hearts, places contentment in their heart. 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 is directly opposite to those who use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, those who outwardly appear to be enjoying the luxuries of the world but face anxiety, stress, depression and suicidal thoughts as they have obtained no peace of mind or body. A muslim should therefore never be fooled by outward appearances. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Drawing Near

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is, the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

The main Hadith under discussion also advises that out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, will only punish according to a sin without multiplying it or He will forgive the sin. Therefore, muslims should never give up hope and strive to sincerely perform righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins to ensure they achieve success, through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the more one obeys 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, the greater the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, they will receive. In each case, a muslim's minimal effort will lead to receiving a greater mercy. This mercy will ensure they are rightly guided through every situation they face so that they overcome them in order to obtain peace of mind, body and true lasting success in both worlds. 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."

But the one who holds back from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and instead uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, will not obtain this mercy and they therefore will not obtain right guidance during their life. Instead they will encounter one difficulty after another, one moment of darkness after another. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Drop and An Ocean

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this similitude was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared, as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups, it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world, as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to prioritize striving for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach, over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. 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."

An intelligent person will not prioritize a drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Your State

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

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

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

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state, which includes being raised with the righteous, as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves misusing the blessings they were granted by Him, and believe that they will somehow be resurrected in a good state thereby joining the pious in Paradise. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Real Wealth

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, the Holy prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the only wealth one truly possesses is connected to three things.

The first is what a person spends of their wealth on obtaining and consuming food. A muslim should spend reasonably on food without excessiveness, waste or extravagance as this can be considered a sin. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 31:

“...and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”

It is vital for muslims to only consume the lawful as one's supplication is rejected if they consume the unlawful according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346. If one's supplication is rejected how can the rest of their actions possibly be accepted by Allah, the Exalted? In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, indicates that any good deed rooted in the unlawful is rejected. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

Finally, a Muslim should adopt the mindset whereby they eat simple food so that they eat in order to live and not live in order to eat, whereby they are constantly distracted by their stomach from more important responsibilities and duties.

The next thing one spends their true wealth on is on their clothes. Again, a muslim should avoid extravagance and waste, as these people have been labeled the siblings of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”

A muslim should be pleased with nice, clean and simple clothing, as this is an aspect of faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118. Islam is not against appearing nice but one must understand that this is easily obtainable without spending much wealth or time. Dedication to appearing nice must never hinder one from their duties and responsibilities. The truth is that the more one indulges in their appearance the more they will adopt extravagance in other aspects of their life, such as their car, home and food. This will prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The final wealth a person truly owns is what they send ahead to the hereafter by spending it in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This includes all the blessings one has been granted, not just wealth. The more one uses these blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more peace and success in both worlds they will obtain. 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."

To conclude, a muslim should remember that the first two things have already been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, as they are a part of their provision which cannot change and was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, they should be moderate in seeking them and instead focus more on the last aspect. All other forms of obtaining and using wealth in reality, does not belong to a person and will be left behind for others to enjoy even though they will be held accountable for it on Judgment Day.

Becoming Pious

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It includes fulfilling the rights of people, which involves treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a muslim one step closer to the unlawful. The closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually, not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no

benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

A Simple Life

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one's needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance. The more one concentrates on a simple life, the easier it becomes to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

In addition, a muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead, the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is, the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter, as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment. The more strict one's accounting, the more they will be punished. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103.

Spend According to Means

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the one who spends in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded according to what they give. And he warned not to hoard otherwise Allah, the Exalted, will withhold His blessings.

It is important to note, that one must only obtain and spend lawful wealth, as any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

In addition, this spending is not only through charity but includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. A muslim should spend in a balanced way whereby they help others without becoming needy themselves. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 29:

“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.”

A muslim should donate regularly according to their means, even if it is a little, as Allah, the Exalted, observes one's quality meaning, their sincerity, not the quantity of a deed. Regularly donating a little is far better and more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than donating a larger amount once in a while. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465.

It is important to note, as mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, when one gives according to their means, Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to His infinite status. But the one who holds back will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. If a muslim hoards their wealth, they will leave it behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. If they misuse their wealth it will become a curse and burden for them in this world and a punishment in the next.

Finally, this Hadith applies to all of the worldly blessings one has been granted, not just wealth. When one strives to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they will find peace of mind, success and an increase in blessings, as they have shown gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

And 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 makes it clear that a Muslim does not need to be wealthy in order to gain blessings, peace and success in both worlds. They only need to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how little these blessings are.

Working for the Hereafter

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2864, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that on Judgment Day the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This will cause people to sweat according to the deeds they performed during their lives on Earth. Some people's sweat will reach up to their ankles, some their knees and for others it will reach their mouths.

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

The same way people strive hard in this material world so that they obtain a comfortable life and even a comfortable retirement, even though reaching retirement age is not guaranteed, muslims should strive even harder in this world by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, so that they can obtain peace and comfort in this world and on the Day that is guaranteed to

occur. It is a sign of great ignorance to strive for a day one may never reach namely, the day of retirement, and not strive for a day they are guaranteed to reach and experience namely, Judgment Day.

Importance of Earning Wealth

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created, as this would make them useless, and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means, as a muslim should firmly believe their provision, which includes wealth, was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means, which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the

means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, understanding and acting on the main Hadith also encourages one to become independent of relying on others to provide for them, such as the government or relatives. Instead, one should use the means provided to them by Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam while fully believing their allocated lawful provision will reach them. This will ensure they trust in Allah, the Exalted, alone.

Establishing Belief

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons, all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand, they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit, they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran, as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

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

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until their children are older, have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this, will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation, usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds, such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions, they are only following their own desires, even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Finally, as warned by the main Hadith, the one who persists on abandoning the obligatory prayers may well find that they leave this world without their faith. In fact, they may well lose it during their life without even realizing it. One must never fool themselves into thinking it is acceptable to fail to support their verbal claim to faith with actions, such as the obligatory prayers. One must bear in mind that the very definition of Muslim, is the one who has practically and internally submitted

themselves to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, there is no such thing as being a Muslim who does not practice Islam, as this attitude contradicts the definition of a Muslim. If a person does not fulfil the definition of a Muslim, how can they consider themselves as one?

Essence of Worship

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that supplication is the essence of worship.

This is because it is a practical demonstration of humility and one's servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, as it is befitting for the servant to ask from the Master.

It is important to know that according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3604, every good supplication is accepted in three ways. It is either fulfilled, the equivalent reward is given in the hereafter or an equivalent evil is removed from one's life.

In the following verse, Allah, the Exalted, guarantees a response to all those who perform supplication. Therefore, one should always bear this in mind and persist in supplications. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you...”

Even before supplicating one should ensure their earnings are lawful and what they consume is lawful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2989, that the supplication of a person who earns and consumes the unlawful will never be accepted.

The first etiquette of supplication is that one should try to face the Qibla when supplicating. This was the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An example of this action is found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2899.

One should raise their hands begging Allah, the Exalted, to fulfill their desire, as this was the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1030.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3556, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, is too shy and generous to turn away a beggar empty handed who raises their hands to Him.

One should begin and conclude their supplication by first praising Allah, the Exalted, and then sending blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1481.

In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 486, a person's supplication remains suspended between the Heavens and the Earth until they send blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One should praise Allah, the Exalted, with phrases mentioned in the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The beautiful names of Allah, the Exalted, are found extensively throughout these divine teachings and should be utilised. For example, chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 24:

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Producer, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names...”

The best supplications are found in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore should be used. For example, chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 41:

“Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.”

But it is absolutely acceptable to supplicate for specific things, as long as they are lawful.

As advised in the Holy Quran one should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, with humility, hoping for His mercy and in fear of His greatness. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 56:

“...And invoke Him in fear and aspiration...”

It is vital to supplicate with enthusiasm full well believing Allah, the Exalted, will fulfil one's needs. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3479, Allah, the Exalted, does not respond to someone who supplicates while heedless or distracted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3505, that when the following verse of the Holy Quran is recited the supplication is always accepted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 87:

“...There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

One should seal their supplication with the word, Ameen, as this ensures its acceptance. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 938.

After the supplication is concluded, it is a practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to wipe one's hands over their face. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1492.

Finally, one should be persistent in supplicating, as giving up is a hasty action which can lead to the supplication being unfulfilled. This warning is given in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3387.

One should make it a habit to remember Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease so that Allah, the Exalted, will help them in times of difficulty. This is advised in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803. As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, Allah, the Exalted, readily accepts the supplication made after the obligatory prayers and in the last part of the night. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321, advises that in the last part of the night the divine descent occurs at which point Allah, the Exalted, calls out and responds to supplications. There is a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 521, which advises that the supplication between the two call to prayers is never rejected. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, while they are prostrating and they should therefore supplicate to Him at this time. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1138. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1046, there is an hour during every Friday where Allah, the Exalted,

readily accepts supplications. When a fasting person breaks their fast their supplication is also accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1753. One should ask the sick to supplicate for them, as it has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1441, that their supplications are like the supplications of the Angels. The supplication made when drinking Zamzam water is always accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3062. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2540, advises that the supplication at the time when it rains is accepted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534, encourages people to supplicate for others in their absence, as they are readily accepted. If one is facing any form of oppression they should supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they will be accepted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1905. This same Hadith advises that the supplication of the traveller is never rejected. Finally, one should encourage their parents to supplicate for them as they are readily accepted. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3862.

Some do not regularly supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, as they claim that He is All Aware and requires no one to inform Him of their desires. Even though this is a fact, it is better to supplicate, as this is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them all, and has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”

Supplicating is an excellent way to demonstrate one's humility and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, as mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3370, nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication. Finally, Allah, the Exalted, becomes angry when a person does not supplicate to Him, as it may indicate they believe they are independent of Allah, the Exalted, which is not true. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3373.

Finally, one must always remember that the supplications found within the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are secondary to actions. Meaning, the supplications are performed after an act of practical obedience. This indicates that supplications support actions. Therefore, supplications without the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted, are unlikely to be fruitful. This was not the habit of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, or the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Unfortunately, many Muslims have become excellent at making supplications but fail to practically obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Even the main Hadith under discussion indicates the importance of practical worship, which is supported by supplications. Supplications cannot replace practical obedience, they instead support them. Both must be present in order to achieve peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 10:

"...To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it..."

Ease and Glad Tidings

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6125, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised to make things easy for others, instead of making things difficult. And to give glad tidings to others and not scare them.

A muslim should always make things easy, firstly for themself by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, so that they can fulfill their obligatory duties, act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will provide them with plenty of time to enjoy lawful things without being wasteful or extravagant. A muslim should act according to their strength in respect to voluntary righteous deeds and not over burden themself, as this is disliked in Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465. A balanced approach is always best.

In addition, muslims should make things easy for others, especially in religious matters, so that people do not grow averse to Islam, believing it is a burdensome religion while it is a simple and easy religion. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287. This is important to teach others, especially children. If children wrongfully believe Islam is a difficult religion they will turn away from it when they get older. Children should be taught that Islam has some obligations which do not take much time to fulfill and leaves plenty of time for them to have fun in good and healthy ways.

But it is important to note, making things easy for oneself or others in religious matters does not mean a muslim should be lazy and teach others to be lazy, as the minimum obligations must be fulfilled at all times, unless one is exempt by Islam. The one who acts lazily is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires.

Another aspect of making things easy for others includes a muslim not demanding their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means they have been granted, such as their physical or financial strength, to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, failing to fulfil the rights of others can lead to punishment. In order to make things easy for others a muslim should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves, if they possess the means to do so without trouble, especially if the child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next. But those who make things difficult for others may find that Allah, the Exalted, makes things difficult for them in both worlds.

A muslim must remind themselves and others of the countless blessings of Allah, the Exalted, and the great reward He bestows on muslims in this world and in the next on those who obey Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This approach, in most cases, is more effective in encouraging people towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Only in some cases when someone is indulging in wishful thinking and disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while expecting they will succeed, should a muslim warn them of the consequences of their actions thereby, inspiring the fear of Allah, the Exalted, in them.

A balance is best whereby one uses hope in Allah, the Exalted, to encourage His obedience and fear of Him in order to prevent sins. And whenever one feels imbalanced or observes others who have become imbalanced, a muslim should act appropriately in order to adjust themselves and others back to the correct middle path.

Status of Worldly Things

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the worldly things which are raised up in social status will eventually be lowered by Allah, the Exalted.

This does not mean that 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, such as fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents. An example describing this duty is recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

The main Hadith means that one should not make worldly success their number one priority and instead dedicate most of their efforts to preparing for the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. 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. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379. Countless people have built empires and achieved worldly success yet all of them faded away. How many people have had their names plastered across sky scrapers yet, after a short while their names were removed and they were forgotten?

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 give up when they face setbacks. The key is to prioritize the success of the hereafter over the 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; fulfil their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people while avoiding waste and extravagance. And they should utilise their worldly success to aid them in the hereafter, such as donating their excess wealth. If their worldly success is fame or political, then they should use their influence to benefit others, as this will help them in the hereafter. This is how one uses their worldly success to benefit their hereafter.

It is important to note, that the one who only aims to benefit himself in this world will not gain benefit in the hereafter. But the one who aims to benefit himself in the hereafter, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will gain benefit in both worlds in the form of peace and success. This is the only way one can ensure they continue to benefit from their worldly success before and after it inevitably fades away. 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."

Taking Revenge

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6853, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never took revenge for himself but instead pardoned and overlooked.

Muslims have been given permission to defend themselves in a proportionate and reasonable way when they are left with no other options. But they should never step over the line as this is a sin. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”

As stepping over the mark is difficult to avoid, a muslim should therefore adhere to patience, overlook and forgive others as it is not only the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but also leads to Allah, the Exalted, forgiving their sins. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Forgiving others is also more effective in changing the character of others in a positive way, which is the purpose of Islam and a duty on muslims, as taking revenge only leads to further enmity and anger between the people involved.

Those who have the bad habit of not forgiving others and always hold onto grudges, even over minor issues, may well find that Allah, the Exalted, does not overlook their faults and instead scrutinizes each of their small sins. A muslim should learn to let things go as this leads to forgiveness in both worlds. In addition, peace of mind is removed when one adopts the habit of holding onto every little issue that annoyed them. Therefore, learning to overlook and pardon others aids one in letting go of petty issues, which in turn, helps them to achieve peace of mind.

Finally, the main Hadith does not mean one should not defend themselves when others cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. In addition, even when one pardons others, it does not mean they should blindly trust them or continue socialising with them as usual. This only increases the chances of them being wronged again. One should forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they must fulfill the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam, and tread cautiously when dealing with the people who have wronged them in the past. This will ensure history does not repeat itself and they gain blessings and reward in both worlds.

Adhere to True Guidance

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered righteous deeds, it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. In truth, the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources, even if they are righteous deeds, the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins, they have preoccupied muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance, as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance, which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and fabricated practices, even if they are not sins, over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Finally, when one persists on doing deeds that are not directly connected to the two sources of guidance, due to ignorance, they will easily fall into practices and beliefs which contradict established Islamic knowledge. This takes the Muslim down the path of sins and misguidance while they think they are rightly guided. The one who knows they are lost is likely to accept and alter their direction when advised to by others. But the one who thinks they are on the correct path is highly unlikely to alter and correct their direction, even when they are warned by others who possess knowledge and clear evidence. The only way to avoid this outcome is to strive to gain and act on the knowledge found in the two sources of guidance and avoid other actions, even if they appear to be good deeds.

A Clean Heart

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned people against speaking negatively about others, as this causes ill feelings towards them in the hearts of people.

It is often observed that families, especially from the Asian community, become broken over time. This is one of the biggest complaints of family members, such as parents. They wonder why their children have become separated even though they were once firmly together.

One of the main reasons the relationships between relatives become fractured is because someone has spoken negatively about a person's relative to them. This is often done by a family member. For example, a mother will speak negatively about her son to her other child. This leads to enmity between the two relatives and over time it builds up and creates a wedge between the two. Those who were once like one person become like strangers to one another.

It is important to understand that people are not Angels. Except for a very few, when a negative thing is said to a person about another, they will get affected by it, even if they do not desire this to occur. This enmity still occurs even if the initial person who spoke negatively about someone's relative does not intend to create a wedge between relatives. Some often act in this way out of habit and are not trying to damage

relationships. For example, parents often adopt this habit and there is no doubt they do not desire the relationships of their children to become fractured or broken.

This attitude has such a serious impact on people's mentality that it also affects relatives that very rarely see or converse with each other. For example, a person will mention negative things about a person's relative to them, even though their relative may not even live in the same country as them. This behaviour implants enmity within their heart and with the passing of time they will find that they dislike their distant relative, even though they barely know them.

This issue often occurs when two people discuss negative things about others in front of other people. For example, parents may discuss negative things about their relatives in front of their children. Even though, they are not telling their children directly, none the less it still affects their hearts. If one truly reflected for a moment they will realise that the majority of the ill feelings they have towards others were not caused by what that person did or said to them directly. In most cases, it occurred because of a third party, who mentioned something negative about that person to them.

In cases where one is trying to warn another of some danger, then it is perfectly acceptable to mention another person in a negative way. If one is trying to teach another person a lesson, they should follow the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and mention the negative thing without naming the person. An example of this beautiful mentality is discussed in a Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 6979. Mentioning a negative thing without naming the person is good enough to teach someone a lesson.

To conclude, muslims should ponder deeply before speaking negatively about their relatives or others, privately or publicly. Otherwise, they may well find, as time passes on, their family and friends become separated and emotionally distant from one another.

The one who hears negative things about others must warn the speaker to desist from backbiting and explain the consequences of their actions to them. They must avoid focusing on the negative things said about a person and instead remember that one negative characteristic does not define a person's entire character. They must continue to show good character towards the person they heard negative things about and fulfill their rights according to the teachings of Islam. Simply put, one should treat people in a way they desire to be treated by others. Behaving in this manner will minimize the negative effects on one's heart caused by those who speak negatively about others.

Perfecting Faith

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, includes loving the things Allah, the Exalted, loves, such as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This love must be practically shown by learning and acting on these two sources of guidance and attaching oneself to the other things beloved to Allah, the Exalted, such as righteous deeds and the Mosques.

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

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is giving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This refers to every blessing one can give to others, such as physical and emotional support, not just wealth. When one gives, they will do so according to the teachings of Islam meaning, in matters pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as giving sincere advice. In fact, this is an aspect of being sincere to others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes giving and sharing these blessings with others without counting one's favors, as this proves they gave in order to receive something from others. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verse 9:

“[Saying], "We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.””

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes withholding the blessings one possesses, such as wealth, from others in matters which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted. This muslim will not observe who is requesting something from them instead they only assess the reason behind the request. If the reason contradicts the teachings of Islam they will withhold the blessing and not take part in the activity. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

This includes withholding one's speech and actions in matters which are not pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as backbiting or manifesting one's anger. This muslim will not speak and act according to their desires and only precede in a situation when it pleases Allah, the Exalted, otherwise, they will withhold and refrain from preceding forward.

To conclude, adopting these characteristics leads to perfection of faith, as they are based on one's emotions and are therefore extremely difficult to control. This control is best achieved when one obtains certainty of faith. This is achieved when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge. Certainty of faith helps to direct one's intention, focus and actions to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This will aid one in controlling the four aspects mentioned in the main Hadith. In addition, whoever is blessed with controlling them will find fulfilling the other duties of Islam easier. These duties consist of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the key to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Protecting Reward

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward, as this muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds, he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is

when one publicly recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publicly can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech and actions.

Times of Grief

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. There are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away, they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Islam is Not Burdensome

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7129, advises that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would choose the right time when discussing religious issues with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as he did not want to over burden or bore them.

Even though, a muslim has no excuses but to fulfill their obligatory duties and learn and act on the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the practical proof of one's claim to faith, none the less, each muslim should act according to their mental and physical strength and treat others according to their mental and physical strength in order to ensure they themselves do not get fed up nor cause others to become fed up of Islam either.

It is important to understand each person has been created unique and given different blessings and gifts. For example, some have the strength to perform much voluntary fasts while others do not. Some have the mental strength to spend the day studying the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas others do not. Some can happily discuss religious issues all day with others, while others just do not have the attention or mental strength to do so. This does not mean those who do not possess the strength to do these things are bad muslims as Allah, the Exalted, will judge each person according to their potential, strength, intention and the deeds they performed. This discussion means that muslims should not be too hard on themselves or others when it comes to striving on

voluntary religious matters. A muslim should strive to improve bit by bit to ensure they do not get fed up and give up completely. If a muslim has been granted the strength to strive in voluntary religious matters, they should praise Allah, the Exalted, as none but Him as granted this to them. Understanding this will prevent the deadly sin of pride, an atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

One must make things easy for others, especially children, so that they understand that Islam is a simple and easy religion, with a few obligations, all aimed to aid them in achieving success and peace in both worlds.

Being Gentle

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran, as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

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

A muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Musa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Harshness only repels people from Islam and causes others to believe it is a harsh and crude religion. Misrepresenting Islam in this manner is a serious offence which all Muslims must avoid.

Therefore, a muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

It is important to note that the main Hadith does not mean one should not defend themselves when others cross the line, as Islam teaches humility without weakness. But it teaches Muslims to generally adopt

gentleness as their way without allowing others to take advantage of them.

Finally, one must always remember a simple Islamic philosophy, how one treats others is how they will be treated by Allah, the Exalted. If one shows harshness in their speech and actions towards others, then they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, if they treat others with gentleness, by making things easy for others, aiding others in good things and overlooking the mistakes and faults of others, then they will be treated similarly by Allah, the Exalted.

A Believer's Traits

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

A true believer can be considered naive, as they always interpret the words and actions of others in a positive way, instead of always thinking bad about others. They do not give a final judgement regarding others, knowing people can change for the better and they treat people how they desire others to treat them. Loving for others what one loves for themselves is in fact the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. They prove this through their actions by supporting others according to their means such as, financial and emotional support. They adopt a simple and straight forward mindset whereby they treat others in an upfront and clear manner. Meaning, they avoid all the negative characteristics associated with trickery, such as being two-faced.

This Hadith describes a believer as noble as they act with good character in both public and in private. Meaning, they show good character in respect to Allah, the Exalted, by having a sincere intention and practically by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They also fulfill the other aspect of faith which is to show good character to people by treating them according to the teachings of Islam, which includes fulfilling the rights of

others, such as their dependents. Their nobility encompasses all aspects of their intention, speech and actions, as real nobility is linked to conduct, not to worldly possessions or social status.

On the other hand an evil person behaves in an opposite way to these characteristics. Specifically, they are deceitful and treacherous in respect to the rights they owe Allah, the Exalted, and people. They demand their rights in full but fail to fulfill the rights of others. They strive to fulfill their desires by any means necessary, including unlawful means, and do not care who they wrong in the process. They misuse the blessings they have been granted thereby harming themselves and others. They falsely believe nobility lies with social status and wealth and as a result, they strive to gain these things at all costs, even if they have to compromise on their faith. Whatever they gain becomes a curse for them in both worlds and they never win the real respect and love of people. Any outward form of respect or love shown to them is fake and rooted in ulterior motives, something they are well aware of, even though they are afraid to admit it.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims not to only rely on their declaration of faith but also strive to adopt the noble characteristics discussed in Islam, as one requires practical righteous actions and conduct in order to support their verbal claim to faith so that they succeed in both worlds. 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."

Closeness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 484, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the person who will be closest to him on Judgment Day will be the one who sent the most blessings and salutations on him.

Sending blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, verbally has been commanded in the Holy Quran and advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3370. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 56:

“Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.”

But it is important to note, if one desires to correctly send blessings and salutations on him they must support their words through actions by learning and acting on his traditions. They should not reorder the priority of his traditions according to their desires. This is in fact the first step which allows one to fulfil another verse of the Holy Quran, chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...””

When one persists on this attitude it will allow them to prioritise preparing for the hereafter over this material world without neglecting their worldly duties. Meaning, it will show them how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and towards people. This includes fulfilling their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This will allow one to navigate through each situation correctly, whether there are times of ease or difficulties, without going overboard in devoting themselves to the material world, their own desires or other people. This attitude will allow them to put everything and everyone in their rightful place within their life without neglecting or excessively devoting themselves to anything or any person.

Allah, the Exalted, would not have set an example in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which was not possible to follow and adopt. 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.”

Each person can achieve this according to their own potential but this requires a sincere effort which is supported by actions. This is the true

meaning of sending blessings and salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner practically proves their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and as a result they will join him in the hereafter. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

Doing Business

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by 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. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In fact, one should treat others how they desire to be treated by people.

In respect to business dealings, a muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes avoiding deceiving others by making them pay excessively for goods. A muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way a muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters, they should not mistreat others.

Acting righteously includes avoiding illegal practices discussed in Islam and the law of the land. If one is not happy with the business laws of their country, they should not do business there.

In addition, acting righteously also includes using one's business success in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure their business and wealth becomes a source of comfort and peace for them in both worlds. 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."

But those who misuse their business success will find that it becomes a source of their stress and misery, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted, the One who granted them the success. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Doubtful and Unlawful

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the lawful and unlawful have been made clear by Islam. In between them are doubtful things which should be avoided in order to protect one's faith and honor.

The vast majority of muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these create no doubt within muslims. Therefore, they should act according to their clear knowledge. Meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from the unlawful according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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, instead He will ask 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. It is important to understand that when one indulges in doubtful or even vain things it will take them one step closer to the unlawful. For example, sinful speech is often preceded by vain and useless speech. Therefore, it is much safer for a muslim's faith and honor to avoid doubtful and vain things.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of adhering to the basic and clear teachings of Islam while avoiding things which have not been

clarified nor discussed in the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If these issues were important, they would have been discussed in the two sources of guidance. Unfortunately, many Muslims concentrate so much on debating on side issues, issues which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day, that they distract themselves and others from those things which Allah, the Exalted, will question them about. This attitude must be avoided.

Excluding Others

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3775, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two people not to converse in private if there is a third person present, as this could make them feel uncomfortable.

As Islam promotes unity, even the small actions which can potentially damage relationships between people has been warned against. It is important to note, that this Hadith also includes conversing in a language the third person does not understand. A muslim's duty is to always make others feel comfortable and this is one of the reasons muslims have been advised to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people they know or do not know. Conversing in private in this manner contradicts this duty as it can make others feel uncomfortable. Only in emergencies should two people converse secretly in the presence of a third person otherwise, they should wait until either the third person leaves or another joins the group so that the third person does not feel left out.

A muslim should implement this teaching namely, making others feel comfortable, in all aspects and situations of their life, as long as it does not lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. An aspect of this is to treat people in a way one would like to be treated by others. They should avoid embarrassing others in public and therefore privately and gently command good and forbid evil. They should adopt a welcoming demeanor so that others feel comfortable around them. One should strive to fulfil the needs of others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, according to their means, as unfulfilled needs would make people feel uncomfortable.

Furthest from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2018, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the types of people he dislikes and will therefore be furthest from him on Judgment Day.

The first type is the one who talks excessively. This is disliked as the one who talks excessively is much more likely to utter vain and useless words which may not be sinful but often lead to sins. In addition, vain speech only wastes time which will be a great regret for the speaker on Judgment Day. And the one who excessively talks is more likely to commit physical sins. A muslim should remember that it only takes a single evil word to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. The one who talks excessively will also find that they fall into more arguments, debates and problems with others. All of these things often lead to other sins, such as severing ties with other people. The one who talks excessively often fails to think things through appropriately and as a result they will make rash and incorrect judgements. This will only lead to stress in both worlds for them.

The next type of person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the loud-mouthed who speaks excessively and artificially in order to boast and show-off through their speech. This person desires to show others how much knowledge they possess thereby attracting attention to themselves. This person will often intend to please people through their actions instead of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in them losing

reward for their righteous actions. In fact, they will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those who they acted for. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

The final person mentioned in the main Hadith is the proud person. This is an evil and foolish mentality as an atom's worth of pride will lead one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. How can one be proud of anything they possess when the Creator and real Owner is none other than Allah, the Exalted? This is as foolish as the one who boasts about someone else's property and possession. Pride only encourages one to reject the truth when it comes from others and causes one to look down at others. The truth must be accepted, irrespective of who it comes from, as the source of truth is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, rejecting the truth is like rejecting the word of Allah, the Exalted. Looking down at others is foolish as no one knows the real value and status of a person in this world or the next except Allah, the Exalted. The one who thinks they are pious may well be insignificant in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, and they may well die without their belief, as no one is guaranteed to leave this world with their faith. Remembering this should prevent one from adopting pride.

Holding On

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures one continues to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the muslim nation. Due to advancements in social media, fashion and culture it has become easier for Muslims to falsely believe peace of mind lies in misusing the blessings they have been granted. It has become easier to adopt the

mentality of following the majority, who have reduced faith to empty practices which have no bearing on how one practically uses the blessings they have been granted. Wishful thinking in Allah, the Exalted, has become widespread amongst the Muslim nation whereby they ignore the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet expect peace and salvation in both worlds. What was considered deviant behaviour by any sensible person has become something people are being urged to embrace. Turning away from all of this misguidance will be difficult and even one's family and friends will criticize them for holding on to the teachings of Islam instead of following the majority. But if one persists Allah, the Exalted, will replace any losses they suffer, such as the loss of love and respect from friends and relatives, with something much superior, namely, peace of mind and body. 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."

And what Allah, the Exalted, has reserved for them in the hereafter is much greater. On the other hand, those who turn away from the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, thereby misusing the blessings they have been granted, will find that all their worldly relationships and blessings become a source of stress and curse for them in this world. And what they receive in the hereafter will be far worse. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, muslims should not get distracted by the worldly desires which have become widespread and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life, if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Over Praising

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2662, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against over praising others.

This is a disliked deed as it firstly can be sinful if the praise is based on falsehood, which often occurs when one over praises others. Even if it is true, over praising people, especially the ignorant, can cause them to become proud. This is an evil characteristic, as an atom's worth of it is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Over praising can even cause the praised person to believe they have fulfilled their potential in obeying Allah, the Exalted, and therefore do not need to strive harder in His obedience.

A muslim should not be fooled by the praise of others as they know their actions and inner hidden character better than any other person. Reflecting on this and the countless times Allah, the Exalted, has concealed their faults from people should prevent them from becoming proud. The truth is, if others knew all the hidden faults and sins of others, no one would praise another. In addition, they should remember that the praised quality they possess was granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore all praise belongs to Him. Finally, a muslim should become more grateful to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Him. One should advise others about this Hadith and warn them not to over praise others.

Only in certain cases is praising others acceptable. One must avoid over praising, always adhere to the truth and it should be done in order to encourage them to do more good. This especially applies to children such as, praising them in respect to their school work, good behaviour and when they fulfill the duties of Islam.

Private Conversations

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1959, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that private conversations are a trust which must be protected.

Unfortunately, many have the bad habit of divulging the private conversations of people to others. This is an incredibly bad characteristic to possess as it contradicts the attitude of a true muslim. Many do this with their close relatives believing it is acceptable, when it is clearly not. A muslim should always keep the words spoken in a conversation secret unless they are fully sure the person they conversed with would not mind the information being mentioned to a third party. If they would, then doing this betrays them and this contradicts being sincere to them. Being sincere to others has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. But it is important to note, even if someone believes the another person would not mind their conversation being divulged to others, nonetheless, it is safer and superior to still refrain from sharing the conversation with a third party.

It is important to act on the main Hadith as it prevents sins, such as backbiting and gossiping, and prevents negative feelings being developed between people. This often occurs as conversations divulged to a third party often leads to misinterpretation and misunderstandings. These all only lead to fractured and broken relationships. If one honestly reflects on their life they will realize that the majority of the people they have felt negative feelings towards occurred because of what they were told about them not what they directly witnessed from them. Divulging private conversations prevents unity amongst people especially

relatives. And unity has been commanded in many teachings of Islam, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6065. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 58:

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due...”

One should treat the words of others just like they desire people to treat their conversations.

Garden or Pit

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality, each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world in the form of their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world, the home they will only remain in for a short time, they must strive harder in beautifying their grave, as the journey to it is inevitable and the stay there very long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith

found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267. One must never forget that the people and worldly things, such as their business, they dedicate most of their energy to, will abandon them when they reach their grave. Only their deeds will accompany them, the same deeds which will determine whether they are placed in a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell.

Finally, a person must not be fooled into assuming that one's faith is good enough to ensure their garden of Paradise. Faith is an inward state which must be reflected outwardly through one's deeds. This is what the Knower of what is in the hearts has commanded. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer...We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And the truth is that as faith is like a tree, it must be watered and nourished by righteous deeds. If one fails to nourish their plant of faith then they may well find that it withers away before they reach their grave.

Love

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5130, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that love for something can make someone deaf and blind.

This means that loving something excessively can make someone blind and deaf to its defects and the negative effects it has on its lover, such as taking them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and is achieved when one fulfils His commands, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Hadith does not mean a muslim should not care for things but it means their love for something should never be excessive. This is when one's love takes them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is the benchmark. If one's love for something or someone prevents them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and instead encourages them to use them in vain or sinful ways, then it is bad for them, even if they do not realize it immediately. But if someone's love for something does not result in this then it shows their love is not unhealthy.

A muslim must prioritize the obedience and love of Allah, the Exalted, over all else, as this will allow them to put all their worldly things and relationships in their rightful place in their life and protect them from misusing the blessings they have been granted out of excessive love for something or someone else.

Excessive love causes one to adopt blind loyalty towards their beloved. This encourages one to support their beloved in every situation, even if they are wrong. This loyalty can even overcome the loyalty one must have towards Allah, the Exalted. This blind loyalty can also encourage one to break the ties they have with people in order to please their beloved, ties which Allah, the Exalted, has commanded to maintain. A person can become so blind and deaf that they begin to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of their beloved instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to insincerity towards Allah, the Exalted. Insincerity to Him leads to misguidance, as one becomes easily accessible to the Devil. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verses 39-40:

"[Iblees] said, "My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them [i.e., mankind] on earth, and I will mislead them all. Except, among them, Your sincere servants.""

A muslim should remember that no matter what they love, a day will certainly come when they will depart from it or their feelings towards it will change, as love is a fickle thing. The only exception is the true love of Allah, the Exalted, which will only strengthen with the passing of time and grow stronger after death.

Believers are Mirrors

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4918, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that believers are like mirrors to each other.

This means that the same way a person uses a mirror in order to remove any outward defects on themselves, they should strive to aid others by sincerely advising them so that they can remove any outer and inner defects from their characters. The same way a muslim would dislike to leave an outward defect on their body after observing it in a mirror, they should equally dislike observing a defect in another muslim without sincerely trying to remove it through sincere advice. Those who ignore the defects of their companions are not true friends, as a true friend would always desire to make the life of their companion better in this world and the next. This is only possible through 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. Any person who does not desire nor strive to bring their companion closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is not a good friend and they have failed to fulfill the duty mentioned in this Hadith. Unfortunately, society has convinced many Muslims that a good friend involves supporting their friend in every situation, even if they are wrong and to only say the things which please them. Even though making others feel better does not contradict Islamic teachings, as long as lies are avoided, none the less, a good friend will always gently point out the truth to their friend, even if this upsets them, as they do not desire their friend to be misguided in both worldly or religious matters.

It is important to emphasize, sincere advice must be offered in a kind and gentle way as people often push others further away from improving by advising them in a harsh manner. In addition, it should be done in private to avoid the other person's embarrassment and according to Islamic teachings, as advice from an ignorant person very rarely leads to a good outcome.

This Hadith also indicates the importance of leading by example, as one's friends are likely to pick up the habits of their friend. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. Therefore, one must ensure they strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they remain rightly guided themselves and influence their friends in a positive way. This is the only friendship which will truly benefit one in both worlds. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Just like a mirror represents a person's image, Muslims represent each other. Therefore, one must ensure they represent the Muslim community in a positive way as this is one of the duties of a Muslim. When one misbehaves thereby misrepresenting the Muslim community this only pushes non-muslims and even other Muslims further away from the teachings of Islam. This misrepresentation is something which one will answer for in the court of Allah, the Exalted.

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of treating other Muslims in a sincere manner, especially when they face difficulties. They should see the hardship of others as they own hardship, they should see the stress of others as their own stress and therefore strive hard to aid others according to their means, such as emotional, physical and financial help. This will ensure they receive the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed by a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853.

Protecting Yourself

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever protects the honor of another Muslim will be protected from Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

Just like a muslim would desire others to protect their honor in their presence or absence, they should protect the honor of others in their presence or absence also. In fact, loving for others what one desires for themselves is the characteristic of a true believer, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. A muslim should protect the honor of others when anyone else speaks ill about them, such as backbiting or slander, irrespective of if what they are saying is true or not. This is an aspect of concealing the faults of others and leads to Allah, the Exalted, concealing their faults in both worlds. This is advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Behaving in such a manner is a clear proof of one's love for others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is a characteristic which leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2688.

The main Hadith under discussion clearly shows that a muslim benefits from supporting others, so even if they are too preoccupied from caring about others they should at least act in this manner for their own sake. This reality applies to all good deeds, such as charity. One only benefits themselves through the reward they gain when they perform good deeds. Allah, the Exalted, has no need for anyone to obey Him and the needy will be provided for, one way or another. Allah, the Exalted, only gives opportunities to people to gain reward by helping others.

In addition, the one who fails to defend the honor of others when they have the opportunity and strength to do so, without fear of harm, should fear that Allah, the Exalted, will not protect their honor in a time and place where it is being violated by others and especially, on the Day of Resurrection.

Finally, as the main Hadith under discussion advises protecting the honor of others, it indirectly indicates the importance of not violating the honor of others. This is in fact the very sign of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Specifically, it advises that a true muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

Paradise Without Reckoning

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5705, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that 70,000 muslims will enter Paradise without reckoning and described their characteristics.

The first characteristic is that they do not treat themselves with spiritual incantations. This is when one recites words connected to the Holy Quran or the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and blows over themselves or others in order to treat a sickness or problem. This method is completely lawful according to many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5741. The unlawful type is when one uses satanic words. Even though, lawful incantations are permissible unfortunately, some muslims become so engrossed and attached to them that they depend and trust more in them than they trust in Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, they almost behave they will only become cured if they do an incantation, as if the power to heal lies in it. This belief contradicts true trust in Allah, the Exalted, as in reality, the source of everything is Allah, the Exalted, alone. He only chooses to cure some people through means, such as conventional medicine or incantations. A muslim should never rely so much on incantations, believing without them a successful outcome is not possible. This is similar to the one who recites spiritual exercises believing if they fail to do so they will not be protected from illness and misfortune or they believe they can somehow change one's destiny, which is completely untrue. Allah, the Exalted, protects people and He can do so with or without spiritual exercises. Meaning, He is not dependent on anything to achieve something. One must instead sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the means He has provided them, such as medicine, according to Islamic teachings and rely on Allah, the Exalted, to choose the best outcome for them in every

situation. No other has any control in deciding what occurs and should therefore not be feared. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

"Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allāh has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon Allāh let the believers rely."

In addition, engrossing oneself in spiritual incantations often leads to a worse illness than they originally feared namely, paranoia. Paranoia causes one to think negatively about Allah, the Exalted, and people. This only leads to weakness of faith and damaging one's relationships with others.

In addition, the primary goal of Islamic teachings is the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted, not performing incantations. A muslim can use lawful incantations but it is best to understand that the source of help is Allah, the Exalted, and nothing can prevent His help nor aid them if He decides something else for them.

Another issue with depending too much on spiritual exercises, such as incantations, is that when these people face difficulties instead of firstly observing themselves and their behaviour to see if they need to change it for the better and to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, patiently waiting for relief, they turn to uneducated and inexperienced people who claim to fix worldly things through spiritual exercises. As indicated earlier, these people only cause a muslim to adopt an illness which is far worse than their initial problem namely, paranoia. They convince muslims that their problems have either been

caused by supernatural creatures, such as jinns or by black magic which someone has used against them. Even though jinns do exist, it is very rare for them to affect people in their worldly matters. This causes muslims to become severely paranoid and superstitious over petty things and it even causes them to grow suspicious over their friends and relatives. This only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. It is important for muslims to strengthen their faith through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will prevent them from turning to such foolish people who cannot even fix their own problems, let alone fix the problems of others. Strong faith will prevent paranoia affecting them as they will rely fully on Allah, the Exalted. Strong faith makes a muslim understand that even if the entire creation desired to harm them they will not be able to do so unless Allah, the Exalted, allowed it. Similarly, the entire creation could not benefit them unless Allah, the Exalted, willed it. And every case and situation only occurs according to a set and unchangeable plan namely, destiny. This has been advised throughout Islamic teachings, such as the far reaching Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516.

Finally, engrossing oneself in spiritual exercises not rooted in Islamic teachings also encourages one to treat the treasury of Allah, the Exalted, like a shop where one buys worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in exchange for some spiritual exercises. This is a highly disrespectful and insincere attitude to adopt, as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are not credit cards which can be used to purchase worldly things, such as a child or a visa. One must instead know their place and behave as a sincere slave of Allah, the Exalted, and not act as a customer. They should sincerely obey Him by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him. One is allowed to ask for lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in a way endorsed by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but must avoid other ways, as it leads to misusing the two sources of guidance and adopting a customer type attitude towards Allah, the Exalted.

To conclude, a muslim should fulfill the primary goal of Islamic teachings by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then rely on Allah, the Exalted, to aid them in all situations.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that these muslims do not believe or are influenced by omens.

A Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 909, warns against paying attention to bad omens, as behaving in this manner is like associating something to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, polytheism.

Paying attention to evil omens means that it affects one's behaviour and actions. Even though black magic and the evil eye are real, it is important to understand that nothing in the universe from the fluttering of a leaf to the Sun rising occurs without the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim should remain steadfast by not bothering with evil omens or fearing witches and wizards as they cannot cause something which Allah, the Exalted, has not willed from occurring. Instead, one should remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, and continue with their lawful actions and choices and only seek protection from evil things according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while fully trusting in the support and overpowering choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted.

Consoling Others

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1601, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who consoles a grief stricken person will be clothed with a garment of honor on Judgment Day.

As facing difficulties are guaranteed for all, this is an extremely simple way of obtaining a great reward which does not require much time, energy or money. This includes striving to aid the family facing a difficulty according to one's means, such as emotional, financial and physical support. A muslim must gently encourage those facing difficulties to remain patient throughout the ordeal and remind them of the verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the importance and great reward of being patient. They should speak positively by reminding them that things only occur for a good reason, even if people fail to understand the wisdom behind them. In reality, a person does not need to be a scholar to perform this righteous deed, as in most cases a few kind words of support are enough to make someone facing difficulties feel better. And in some cases just physically being there is enough to provide them with the feeling of support even if no words are spoken.

This attitude is easily adopted when one simply treats others how they desire to be treated by people.

Finally, it is important muslims correct their intention when performing this righteous deed meaning, do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not do it in order to show off to others, such as their relatives, nor do it out of fear of being criticized by others if they fail to do it. Those who act for the sake of others will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those they acted for which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Fulfill Your Needs

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted, and it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues, for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, advises that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed, as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Finally, the main Hadith also indicates the importance of never giving up hope as the door to repentance and success is always open. People are given opportunity every day and night to return to sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, so that they can find peace and success in both worlds. One should appreciate the great mercy Allah, the Exalted, shows, as He is not in need of the creation yet invites them to Himself so that they can succeed. One must take these opportunities before their time runs out and they are left with nothing except regrets.

Avoiding People

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6032, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the worse people on the Day of Judgment are those who are avoided because of their evil behaviour.

This is the one who possesses bad character especially, towards people. They negatively affect others through their speech, such as using vulgar language, and harm them through their actions, such as physical violence and intimidation. As good character will be the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can judge how significant bad character will be. Evil behaviour completely contradicts the characteristic of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It advises that a true muslim and believer keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others.

A muslim should understand the importance of fulfilling both aspects of faith. The first is to show good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

The other aspect of faith is to show good character to others by practically loving for others what one loves for themselves. This is a characteristic of a true believer, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This undoubtedly includes treating others kindly, just like one would like people to treat them with kindness and respect.

Finally, a muslim must always avoid wronging others, through their speech or actions. Justice will be established on Judgement Day whereby an oppressor will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the oppressor will be given the sins of their victims. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

This makes it clear that evil behaviour leads to loneliness in this world, as no decent person desires to befriend such an evil person, and it leads to trouble and stress in both worlds.

Hearing and Speaking

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4992, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that speaking about everything one hears to others is enough to make them sinful.

It is important to note, one should firstly ensure they only listen to lawful speech, as actively participating in a conversation which involves sinful speech will negatively affect them in both worlds. A muslim should try to avoid conversations involving vain and useless speech, as this often leads to sinful speech and is a waste of one's precious time, which will be a great regret for them on Judgment Day, especially when they observe the rewarded given to those who utilised their time correctly.

Secondly, they should ensure that they do not relate everything they hear to others, as this can easily lead to backbiting and slandering, which are major sins. It also often leads to fractured and broken relationships, especially amongst relatives, as negative feelings are generated in the hearts of people when they hear things that were not intended for them. A muslim should only relate things they hear if they can avoid sins and if the information is beneficial to others. In addition, the information they pass on must be verified and authentic, as conveying things which are not verified contradicts the command of the Holy Quran. A muslim who intends to benefit people may well harm them by acting in this manner. 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.”

One must instead control their speech so that they only speak good or remain silent, as vain and sinful speech only leads to stress and trouble in both worlds.

One must adopt good company in order to avoid listening to vain or sinful speech. This would also prevent them from passing on vain or sinful speech to a third party.

To conclude, just like a muslim would not like most of the things they discuss to be spread to others, they should not treat what others say in this manner either.

Purifying the Heart

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

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

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themselves and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

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

On the other hand, when one abandons learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, they will adopt the bad characteristics which are advocated by society, social media, culture and fashion. These bad characteristics will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten."

And chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

Spreading Peace

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 12, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a good quality found within Islam. Namely, to spread the Islamic greeting of peace to people one knows and to those they do not know.

It is important to act on this good characteristic as nowadays muslims often only spread the Islamic greeting of peace to those they know. It is important to spread it to all, as this leads to love between people and strengthens Islam. In fact, this characteristic leads to Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 194. One must avoid the bad habit of only shaking hands with other Muslims without extending the Islamic greeting of peace to them. The verbal greeting of peace is more important than only shaking hands.

A muslim should never forget that they will receive a minimum of ten rewards for every greeting of peace they extend to others, even if others fail to reply to them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5195.

Finally, a muslim should fulfill the Islamic greeting of peace correctly by demonstrating this peace in their other speech and actions towards others by keeping their verbal and physical harm away from people and their possessions. This is in fact, the definition of a true muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. It

is hypocritical for someone to extend the greeting of peace to someone and then harm them through their speech and actions. In fact this attitude defies the purpose of extending the greeting of peace to others.

Strict Accounting

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that whoever has their deeds scrutinized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day will be punished.

It is important for muslims to understand that even though enjoying the lawful pleasures of this material world are not prohibited, they often lead to the unlawful. For example, vain speech is usually the first step before sinful speech. In addition, the more one indulges in unnecessary lawful things the longer their accountability will be on Judgment Day. One should bear in mind that Judgment Day will be a difficult day. For example, the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. While one waits for their accounting and during their final judgement, Hell will be face to face with them. Therefore, the longer one's accounting, the more stress they will endure. Even though, a muslim may be forgiven and saved by Allah, the Exalted, but none the less, the longer their accountability the greater stress they will endure. Seeing as Judgment Day will be fifty thousand years long, according to the Holy Quran, it does not make sense to enjoy a few decades of lawful pleasures if it means one will face a difficult accountability on a day which will last so long. Chapter 70 Al Ma'arij, verse 4:

“...during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.”

It is therefore best to lead a simple life in order to minimize one's accountability on the Day of Judgment. It is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith. It is a simple life which will cause the poorer Muslims to enter Paradise five hundred years before the rich Muslims, as their accounting will be less. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4122. Seeing as people do not generally live for more than 80 years, does it make sense to live an indulgent life if it leads to a delay in entering Paradise by five hundred years? This assuming of course, one enters Paradise directly without being punished in Hell first.

A Muslim must always remember that the more they indulge in lawful worldly things, the more they will face stress in this world, the more it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and the harder their accountability will be on Judgement Day. Whereas, the one who leads a simple life, whereby they obtain and utilise worldly things according to their necessities and responsibilities without waste, excessiveness and extravagance, will obtain peace of mind and body and they will be encouraged to prepare practically for the Day of Judgement, which leads to an easier final accounting. It does not take a scholar to determine which path is best.

Total Purification

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the five obligatory prayers erase one's sins just like taking a bath five times a day would clean the body from dirt.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith refers to minor sins only, as major sins require sincere repentance. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In addition, it is important for muslims to not only purify their outer beings of minor sins, by establishing the five obligatory prayers, but also fulfill the other aspect of purification namely, inner purification. This is indicated by the fact that the five obligatory prayers were spread across the day instead of being put together. Meaning, a muslim should repeatedly inwardly turn to Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day just like their body turns to Allah, the Exalted, five times a day through the obligatory prayers. This inner purification involves correcting one's intention so that they only perform actions in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is the foundation of Islam and is what Allah, the Exalted, assesses when judging an action. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of other people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgment Day,

which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Finally, this inner purification includes learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that one removes the bad characteristics they possess, such as envy, and instead adopts good characteristics, such as patience. The outer purification is important but if a muslim desires to achieve success and overcome all difficulties in both worlds they must purify their inner being as well as their outer being. Inner purification will ensure one speaks and acts in the correct way. It will ensure they use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It will ensure they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. 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."

On the other hand, avoiding inner purification will prevent one from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if they fulfill the basic obligatory duties of Islam. It will hinder them from fulfilling all the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and especially the rights of people. This will lead to a difficult and stressful life in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life..."

What is Sacred

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that the blood, property and honor of a muslim are sacred in Islam.

This Hadith, like many others, teaches muslims that success can only be obtained when one fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, and the rights of people. One without the other is not good enough. Justice will be established on Judgement Day whereby an oppressor will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the oppressor will be given the sins of their victims. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A true believer and muslim is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from the self and possessions of others. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Therefore, it is vital for muslims not to harm others through their actions or words.

A muslim must respect the possessions of others and not try to wrongfully acquire them, for example, in a legal case. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, warns that someone who does this will go to Hell, even if the thing they acquired was as insignificant as a twig of a tree. Muslims should only use the possessions of others according to

their wishes and return them in a way pleasing to its owner. One should treat the possessions of others in a way they want people to treat their own possessions.

The honor of a muslim should not be violated through actions or speech, such as backbiting or slander. A muslim should instead defend the honor of others, whether in their presence or absence, as this will lead to their protection from the fire of Hell. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1931. One should only speak about others in a way they wish others to speak about them. One should therefore speak good or remain silent.

To conclude, one should avoid wronging the self, possessions or honor of others by treating others exactly how they desire others to treat them. Just like one loves this for themselves, they should love it for others and prove this through their actions and speech. This is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Acting Now

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2866, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that giving charity during one's life time is 100 times better than giving it when they reach their deathbed.

This is important to understand as many muslims foolishly believe they can either hoard their wealth or spend it in ways pleasing to their own desires instead of in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and when they reach their death beds they will then donate large amounts of wealth. First of all, as warned in this Hadith, a muslim will lose most their reward behaving in this manner. This is because they have realized that they are departing from this world and their precious wealth has now become insignificant and useless to them, as they cannot take it with them. Giving something useless to Allah, the Exalted, is not the characteristic of a true muslim. In fact, it contradicts true belief and piety. 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...”

A muslim should therefore be kind to themselves and spend in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which includes spending on their own necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. They should not wait for their last

moment, as this might come unexpectedly and spending at this time will not be so fruitful for them anyway.

Best Conduct

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family.

Unfortunately, some have adopted the bad habit of treating non-relatives in a kind manner, while mistreating their own family. They behave in this manner as they do not understand the importance of treating one's own family kindly and as they fail to appreciate their family. A muslim will never achieve success until they fulfill both aspects of faith. The first is fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

The second is to fulfill the rights of people, which includes treating them kindly. None have more right to this kind treatment than one's own family. A muslim must aid their family in all matters which are good and warn them against bad things and practices in a gentle way, according to the teachings of Islam. They should not blindly support them in bad things simply because they are their relatives nor should they fail to help them in good matters because of some ill feelings towards them, as this contradicts Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

The best way to guide others is through a practical example, as this is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is much more effective than just verbal guidance.

One must learn the rights they are owed and the rights they owe others, especially their relatives, to ensure they fulfill them. A Muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, will ask each person whether they fulfilled the rights of others, He will not ask them if people fulfilled their rights. Therefore, one must be concerned about what they will be questioned about, meaning, the rights of others, and therefore strive to fulfill them according to the teachings of Islam.

Finally, one should generally choose gentleness in all matters especially, when dealing with their family. Even if their commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good, as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

A Virtuous Gift

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. 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. Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere 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. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners, as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. If one fails to teach their child good manners then they will only become a source of stress for them in both worlds.

The best way a parent can teach their child good manners is by leading by example. They must learn and act on the teachings of Islam and become a practical role model for their child to follow.

Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but also leaves good behind, as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

Good Spending

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on construction.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one's needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often encourages a muslim to adopt hopes for a long life, as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one's hope for a long life, the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer, out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality, taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things, not just construction, so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

The Superior Ones

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the Exalted, when they observe the actions of these righteous muslims, as they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves and others. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous muslims speak, as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. They love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

The Nation's Strength

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the muslims today are greater in number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favoring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. They used the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Whereas, most of the muslims today have adopted the opposite mindset. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two

hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless, it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for muslims. What he feared was that muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith, this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that muslims should act like one body, when any part of the body suffers from an illness, the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themselves, which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a

Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the muslims today. This attitude would prevent the Muslims from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This would cause them to lose the support of Allah, the Exalted, which opens the door for their enemies to overpower them.

If muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had, they must strive and prioritize preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining, enjoying and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

The Next Step

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1372, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed that there is punishment in the grave.

Many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss this stage which all people will face in some form or fashion. As it is inevitable, muslims must prepare for it as the light or darkness of the grave does not come from the grave itself. It is one's deeds which either darkens or illuminates their grave. Similarly, it is one's deeds which will determine if they face punishment or mercy in their grave. The only way to prepare for it is through piety which consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. These righteous deeds will protect one from the punishment of the grave, by the permission and mercy of Allah, the Exalted.

It is strange how a Muslim will dedicate much time, energy and wealth to making their worldly home comfortable, even though their stay in this world is short, whereas, they pay little attention to making their grave comfortable, even though one's stay in the grave will be long and more serious.

Muslims often journey to cemeteries in order to bury their relatives and friends. But very few truly realize that one day, sooner or later, their turn will come. Even though, the majority of muslims dedicate the majority of their efforts to pleasing their family and earning wealth over pleasing Allah, the Exalted, through righteous deeds, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that these two things, which muslims give priority to, will abandon them at their grave and only their deeds will remain with them. Therefore, it makes sense for a muslim to give priority to obtaining righteous deeds over pleasing their family and obtaining excess wealth. This does not mean one should abandon their family and wealth. But it means they should fulfil their duty to their family according to the teachings of Islam without going overboard by neglecting their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and only obtain the wealth they require to achieve this. When this is done correctly it becomes a righteous deed as well. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. One should never abandon their duties to Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of their family or wealth as this will only lead to an isolated, lonely and dark grave. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 55:

“From it [i.e., the earth] We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time.”

Traits to Avoid

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned of two bad traits which must be avoided.

The first is greed. This can lead one to withholding the obligatory charity and this only leads to destruction in both worlds. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

If one's greed prevents them from donating voluntary charity it may not be unlawful but it is highly undesirable as this contradicts the characteristic of a true believer. Put simply, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

Greed will encourage one to use their blessings, such as their time and wealth, in ways pleasing to themselves instead of recognising that the path to peace and success in both worlds is to use the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the true Owner and Bestower of all blessings.

A greedy person only ever cares about their own rights and will therefore easily neglect the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This only leads to stress and trouble in both worlds.

The other characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is extreme cowardice. This attitude prevents trust in Allah, the Exalted, and in what He has promised, such as one's guaranteed provision. It can cause one to seek their provision in doubtful and unlawful means, which will destroy a person in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, does not accept any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342. Just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention, similarly the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilising the lawful.

In addition, being a coward prevents one from striving against the Devil and one's inner Devil which requires genuine struggle. This will lead one to fail in obeying 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. And it will therefore prevent them from fulfilling the rights of people. Both worldly and religious success requires effort and time. A coward will be too afraid to undertake this

struggle and will instead be lazy which leads to failure in both worldly and religious matters.

In addition, a coward will easily claim they are trying their best in obeying Allah, the Exalted, while they are hardly putting in any effort. They claim this even though the Holy Quran makes it clear that if a person tries their best and acts according to their potential they will correctly fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This is because Allah, the Exalted, never gives duties to a person which are beyond their capacity to fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

Cowardice will also encourage one to aim for the minimum in both religious and worldly matters. They will refrain from fulfilling their potential, as this requires genuine effort. This attitude will only lead to stress and regrets in both worlds.

True Beauty

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves, as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people, which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Nor should beautifying oneself prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

This beautifying attitude applies to all things, such as one's home. As long as one avoids extravagance and waste and continues to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, they are free to make things comfortable for themselves in a moderate manner.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, which includes treating others in a way one wishes people to treat them.

The Friends of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2347, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that his true friend is the one who possesses the following characteristics.

The first characteristic is that they strive and obtain only what they require in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excessiveness, waste and extravagance. One can adopt this attitude when they strive to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This has been outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that they have a good share in the prayer. This means they establish their obligatory prayers by fulfilling them correctly with all their conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. This also includes establishing the voluntary prayers which are based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the voluntary night prayer. This is in fact the best prayer after the obligatory prayers according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614. A good share in the prayer also includes offering the obligatory prayers with the congregation at a Mosque when possible. It is sad to see how many Muslims live in proximity of a Mosque yet still do not join the congregation, even when they are free from work.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that this muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, in public and in private. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Doing so in private indicates a person's sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they only perform righteous deeds for His sake. This is the one who firmly remembers that no matter where they are, the inner and outer aspects of their being is constantly being observed by Allah, the Exalted. If one persists on this belief they will adopt excellence of faith, which is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. It means they act, such as performing the prayer, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, watching them. This attitude encourages righteous deeds and prevents sins.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith is that they avoid obtaining any type of fame or social honor. According to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, this desire is more destructive to a muslim's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause to a herd of sheep. A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than their craving for wealth. A person will even spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but the one who receives it without asking for it will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148,

warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment.

This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, warns that this person will go to Hell.

Seeking repute also causes one to act in order to please people instead of acting to please Allah, the Exalted. This person will be told to gain the reward for their deeds on Judgement Day from the people they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Seeking repute also causes one to adopt negative characteristics, such as being two-faced, in order to please everyone. This leads to many sins and this person will ultimately be disgraced publicly by Allah, the Exalted. The very people which they aimed to please will criticize and hate them, even if they conceal this from them.

The final thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that their death comes quickly, their mourners are few and the inheritance they leave behind is small.

Their death comes suddenly so that they are taken to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, quickly and in order to protect them from the difficulties of a slow and prolonged death.

Their mourners are few, as they avoided seeking social honor and preferred to remain anonymous, as they feared showing off their righteous deeds to others. But the few mourners they do have are far better than the many the rich and famous have. Their few mourners are sincere in their sadness and genuinely supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for their forgiveness whereas the many mourners of the rich and famous do not behave in this manner.

The inheritance they leave behind is small, as they directed the vast majority of their blessings towards the hereafter, by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They understood that anything they left behind would fall into the hands of others who would enjoy the blessings while they, the deceased, will be held accountable for obtaining it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, warns that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds accompany them in their lonely grave. Therefore, they concentrate on obtaining righteous deeds by using their blessings correctly and avoid misusing them thereby committing sins. Even though, they leave little behind as inheritance they in fact take a lot with them to the hereafter in order to support themselves in their moment of need. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 18:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow...”

Finally, they may not leave much worldly things behind, such as wealth and properties, but they do leave behind a huge legacy of goodness, such as ongoing charity and useful knowledge, which continues to benefit them even after their death. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376.

To conclude, those who claim to love the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, must support this verbal claim with actions. Claims without actions have little value in both worldly and religious matters. One of these proofs is to adopt these characteristics which lead to his friendship. The one who befriends the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will be granted his company in the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 69:

"And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions."

The Questions

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3120, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person will be asked three questions in the grave.

The first question will be who is your Lord? In order to answer this question correctly a muslim must not only believe in Allah, the Exalted, but prove this belief through actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His decrees with patience. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. It is this very proof which will support a muslim in their grave when they encounter this question. It is important to note, that even some non-muslims believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet they will fail to answer this question correctly as they did not use the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Him, during their lives on Earth. If only believing in Him was enough, then these non-muslims would succeed in this question. But it is quite evident they will not succeed.

The next question will be what is your religion? If a muslim desires to answer this correctly they must not only believe in Islam but practically implement its teachings in their everyday life. This involves sincerely striving to obtain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is the reason gaining useful knowledge has been made a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Following Islam goes beyond the few obligatory duties and involves

acting on its teachings in every aspect of one's life, such as one's social, financial, work and personal life.

The final question according to this Hadith will be who is your Prophet? It is important to note, that even some of the past nations believed in their Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they did not follow in their footsteps correctly, they will fail in answering this question correctly. If a muslim desires to answer this question correctly they must not only verbally declare their belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but actively learn and act on his traditions and teachings. This is the very purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, meaning, to practically follow them. 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.”

The mercy, love and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which will help a muslim answer this question correctly is only possible to obtain through this method. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, “If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.””

To conclude, just like the questions in a written or oral exam cannot be answered successfully without practically learning knowledge, through studying and revision, neither can a person answer the questions of the grave successfully without practically learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in every aspect of one's life.

Knowing the Names of Allah, the Exalted

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever knows the ninety nine names of Allah, the Exalted, will enter Paradise.

Knowing does not only refer to memorizing them. It actually means to study them and act on them according to one's status and potential. For example, Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Merciful according to His infinite status. This attribute means that Allah, the Exalted, bestows countless favors on the creation and is always extremely kind to them. This same characteristic has been attributed to others, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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.”

When used in reference to the creation, merciful means soft-hearted and compassionate. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving according to His infinite status. And adopting this attribute by forgiving others, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is something which has been encouraged in Islam. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

So the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, can be adopted by muslims according to their status and potential.

Therefore, muslims must first understand the meaning of the divine attributes and names and then adopt the meaning of the names in their character through action, until they become firmly rooted into their spiritual heart so that they can achieve noble character. This noble character will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace and success in both worlds. 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."

Send Ahead or Leave Behind

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that two things abandon a deceased at their grave and only one thing remains with them. The two things which abandon them are their family and wealth and the only thing which remains with them are their deeds.

Throughout history people have always concentrated the majority of their efforts to obtaining wealth and a happy family. Even though Islam does not prohibit these things, as they may be required to fulfill one's responsibilities and duties. Islam only discourages Muslims from striving for these things beyond their needs and in cases when these things prevent one from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

One must strive to obtain the needed wealth to fulfill their responsibilities, according to the teachings of Islam, and obtain a family which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter. These are both considered good deeds when utilized in such a manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6373. This is the sign of an intelligent person who gives priority to the thing which will endure and support them in their moment of need namely, righteous deeds. On the other hand, the one who allows their wealth and relatives to prevent them from using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, are described as losers in the Holy Quran. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 9:

“O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers.”

Some may incorrectly believe they are close to Allah, the Exalted, as He has bestowed them with great wealth and family. But Allah, the Exalted, clears their confusion by declaring that the one who is dearer and nearer to Him are those who believe and perform righteous deeds. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 37:

“And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness...”

In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, warns mankind that their wealth and relatives will not benefit them in the hereafter unless they reach the hereafter with a sound heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

The definition of the sound heart is lengthy, but simply put, one cannot obtain it until they sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they adopt positive characteristics and eliminate negative characteristics. The one who possesses good character will fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in this manner possesses a sound spiritual heart and body.

In addition, one's wealth can only benefit them in the hereafter if they send it ahead of them by spending it on ongoing charity projects. This is confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. The same Hadith informs mankind that a righteous child praying for the forgiveness of their deceased parent will be accepted also. Unfortunately, in this day and age many children are too busy seeking their inheritance to supplicate for their deceased parents. It is important to understand that raising a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent is not possible to achieve if the parents do not perform righteous deeds themselves during their lives i.e. leading by example. Secondly, it is not the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, to abstain from performing righteous deeds and hope others will pray for them after they depart from this world. One should strive for righteous deeds while they are alive and then hope others will pray for them after they pass away.

It is important to understand that only the wealth one sends forward to hereafter will benefit them. This involves spending one's wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as spending on fulfilling one's

responsibilities and duties, such as the education of their children. All wealth spent on vain or sinful things will become a source of stress for the owner and may well lead to their punishment in both worlds. Those who withhold the obligatory charity out of greed have been warned of dreadful punishments. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that a person who commits this grave sin on the Day of Judgement will encounter a huge poisonous snake which will wrap around them and bite them continuously. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection...”

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1658, warns that on the Day of Judgment the gold and silver a person owned will be heated up in the flames of Hell and their bodies will be branded with it, if they failed to donate the obligatory charity due on it.

Furthermore, any wealth left behind by the deceased will be left to others to enjoy, while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it. It is important to note, if a person knowingly leaves wealth to someone who is not fit to possess it and thus misuses it, then the deceased may well be held accountable for this also. Conversely, if one leaves wealth behind to someone who spends it correctly then the deceased will face much regret on the Day of Judgment when they observe the great reward given to the one who spent it correctly.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, that a person can only use their wealth in three ways. The first is the wealth which is spent on their food. The second is the wealth spent on their clothes and the final wealth is what they spent in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. All other wealth is left behind for other people to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it.

Hoarding and incorrectly spending wealth inspires one to love the material world and dislike the hereafter, as they dislike leaving their beloved wealth behind, which will occur when they die. The one who dislikes the hereafter will not adequately prepare for it. Meaning, they will not use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, if one desires to adopt true piety then they must be ready to spend their wealth for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. 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...”

In reality, wealth is a strange companion as it only benefits someone when it leaves them, meaning, when it is spent in the correct way.

A person would be labelled a fool if they went on a long trip without any provisions. Similarly, the one who does not send their wealth ahead in the form of provisions for their long journey to the hereafter is also foolish.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest pains a person feels at the time of death is when they realize that they are leaving behind their hard earned wealth and journeying towards the hereafter empty handed. A muslim should avoid this outcome at all costs.

Performing righteous deeds is the only way one prepares for their grave, as no other things of comfort will be found there. It is in fact the means for preparing one's eternal home in the hereafter. Therefore, this preparation should take priority over preparing for the temporal material world.

A person would be labelled a fool if they had two homes and dedicated the majority of their efforts on beautifying the home which they will spend less time in. Similarly, if a muslim dedicates more time and effort in beautifying their temporal home in this world over the eternal home of the hereafter, they too are simply foolish. This is the attitude of some, even though they admit and believe their stay in this world is short and for an unknown length whereas, their stay in the hereafter will be eternal. This attitude indicates a lack of certainty of faith and it is therefore vital for anyone who shares this mentality to seek and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their certainty of faith before they reach the hereafter bereft of all good.

The one who prepares for their grave with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find that their good deeds provide comfort for them whereas, the sins their accumulated will only make their stay in the dark grave worse. A muslim should therefore perform good deeds during their strength and ability before their time of weakness arrives. Each muslim should recognise the reality indicated in the main Hadith and therefore use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, before they reach a time when their request to be given more time to perform righteous deeds will be denied. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, “My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous.” But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come...”

They should reflect now on their deeds so that they can sincerely repent from sins and strive harder to perform righteous deeds before a day arrives when reflecting 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?”

Let each one ponder over those who passed away before them and their inability to perform more righteous deeds to comfort them in their moment of need. Make haste before this time arrives and prepare for the inevitable. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 99:

“And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death].”

Unity

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6541, discusses some aspects of creating unity within society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, firstly advised muslims not to envy each other.

This is when a person desires to obtain the very blessing someone else possesses meaning, they desire for the owner to lose the blessing. And it involves disliking the fact that the owner was given the blessing by Allah, the Exalted, instead of them. Some only desire this to occur in their hearts without showing it through their actions or speech. If they dislike their thoughts and feelings, it is hoped that they will not be held accountable for their envy. Some exert efforts through their speech and actions in order to confiscate the blessing from the other person, which is undoubtedly a sin. The worst kind is when a person strives to remove the blessing from the owner even if the envier does not obtain the blessing.

Envy is only lawful when a person does not act on their feelings, dislikes their feelings and instead strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing they possess. Even though this type is not sinful yet it is disliked if the envy is over a worldly blessing and only praiseworthy if it involves a religious blessing. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the praiseworthy type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first is when a person envies the one who acquires and spends lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The

second is when a person envies the one who uses their wisdom and knowledge in the correct way and teaches it to others.

The evil type of envy, as mentioned earlier, directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. The envious person behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. This is why it is a major sin. In fact, as warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4903, envy destroys good deeds just like fire consumes wood.

An envious muslim must strive to act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. It advises that a person cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. An envious muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them. They should continue to fulfill the rights of the person they envy, according to the teachings of Islam. They should learn and act on Islamic knowledge in order to understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants the best thing to each person and if a particular worldly blessing has not been granted to them it means that it is better for them not to have it. 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."

Another thing advised in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning is that muslims should not hate each other. This means one should only dislike something if Allah, the Exalted, dislikes it. This has been described as an aspect of perfecting one's faith in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. A muslim should therefore, not dislike things or people according to their own desires. If one dislikes another according to their own desires they should never allow it to affect their speech or actions as it is sinful. A muslim should strive to remove the feeling by treating the other according to the teachings of Islam meaning, with respect and kindness. A muslim should remember that other people are not perfect just like they are not perfect. And if others possess a bad characteristic they will undoubtedly possess good qualities also. Therefore, a muslim should advise others to abandon their bad characteristics but continue to love the good qualities they possess. A Muslim must dislike sins but not the person, as a person can always repent to Allah, the Exalted. They must show their dislike of sins within the boundaries of Islam. They should gently advise others against bad things, as being harsh often pushes further away from turning back to Allah, the Exalted.

Another point must be made on this topic. A muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars, a muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims should not turn away from each other. This means they should not sever ties with other muslims over worldly issues thereby refusing to

support them according to the teachings of Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6077, it is unlawful for a muslim to sever ties with another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. In fact, the one who severs ties for more than a year over a worldly issue is considered like the one who has killed another muslim. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4915. Severing ties with others is only lawful in matters of faith. But even then a muslim should continue to advise the other muslim to sincerely repent and only avoid their company if they refuse to change for the better. They should still support them on lawful things when they are requested to do so, as this act of kindness may inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that muslims are commanded to be like brothers to one another. This is only achievable if they obey the previous advice given in this Hadith and strive to fulfil their duty towards other muslims according to the teachings of Islam, such as helping others in matters of good and warning them from evil matters. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1240, advises that a muslim should fulfil the following rights of other muslims: they are to return the Islamic greeting of peace, to visit the sick, to take part in their funeral prayers and to reply to the sneezer who praises Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must learn and fulfil all the rights other people, especially other muslims, have over them, as each person will be asked whether they

fulfilled the rights of other people on Judgement Day. One must treat others in a way they wish to be treated by people.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that a muslim should not wrong, forsake or hate another muslim. The sins a person commits should be hated but the sinner should not be as they may sincerely repent at any time.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4884, that whoever humiliates another muslim Allah, the Exalted, will humiliate them. And whoever protects a muslim from humiliation will be protected by Allah, the Exalted.

The negative characteristics mentioned in the main Hadith quoted at the beginning can develop when one adopts pride. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, pride is when one looks down on others in contempt. The proud person sees themselves as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others. And pride encourages one to reject the truth when it is presented to them, as it did not come from them and contradicts their desires.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing Islamic clothes, but it is an internal characteristic. This internal characteristic manifests outwardly in the form of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from

His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094, that when the spiritual heart is purified the whole body becomes purified but when the spiritual heart is corrupt the whole body becomes corrupt. It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, does not judge based on outward appearances, such as wealth, but He considers the intentions and actions of people. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6542. Therefore, a muslim must strive to adopt internal piety through learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that it manifests outwardly in the way they interact with Allah, the Exalted, and the creation.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that it is a sin for a muslim to hate another muslim. This hatred applies to worldly things and not disliking others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, loving and hating for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then, a muslim must show respect to others in all cases and dislike only their sins without actually hating the person. In addition, their dislike must never cause them to act against the teachings of Islam, as this would prove their hatred is based on their own desires and not for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The root cause of despising others for worldly reasons is pride. It is vital to understand that an atom's worth of pride is enough to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that a muslim's life, property and honour are all sacred. A muslim must not violate any of these rights. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a person cannot be a true muslim until they protect other people, including non-muslims, from their harmful speech and actions. And a true believer is the one who keeps their evil away from the lives and property of others. Whoever violates these rights will not be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, until their victim forgives them first. If they do not, justice will be established on Judgment Day whereby the good deeds of the oppressor will be given to the victim and if necessary, the sins of the victim will be given to the oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a muslim should treat others exactly how they want people to treat them. This will lead to much blessings for an individual and create unity within their society.

Company of Allah, the Exalted

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises muslims on some important things. The first is that Allah, the Exalted, acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven, then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to, and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby misusing the blessings they have been granted and still expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them and grant them mercy in both worlds. This is not true hope, it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up, they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life, as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death, a muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him, as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is with anyone who remembers Him.

With the rise of mental problems and disorders, such as depression, it is vital for muslims to understand the importance of this declaration. There is a small chance of a person experiencing a mental issue when they are constantly surrounded and aided by someone that truly loves them. If this is true for a person it is undoubtedly more befitting for Allah, the Exalted, who has promised to be with the one who remembers Him. Acting on this declaration alone would eliminate mental issues, such as depression. It is the reason why being secluded from others or being amongst others did not affect the mental state of the righteous predecessors as they were always in the company of Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious that when one obtains the company of Allah, the Exalted, they will overcome all obstacles and difficulties successfully until they reach His proximity in the hereafter.

In addition, out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, has not restricted this declaration in any way. For example, He did not declare He was

only with the righteous or with those who perform specific good deeds. He in fact, encompassed every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith or how many sins they have committed. Therefore, a muslim should never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. But it is important to note the condition mentioned in this Hadith namely, to remember Allah, the Exalted. This remembrance includes correcting one's intention so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted, and therefore do not expect nor hope for any gratitude from people. Remembrance with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And the highest level of remembrance is to use the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the true remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be blessed with the company and support of Allah, the Exalted.

Simply put, the more one obeys and remembers Allah, the Exalted, the more they will receive His company. What one gives is what they shall receive.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that whoever remembers Allah, the Exalted, privately will be remembered by Him privately. And whoever remembers Allah, the Exalted, publicly meaning, in a gathering, will be remembered by Allah, the Exalted, in a better gathering meaning, amongst the Heavenly Angels.

This like many other examples found within the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon

him, indicates a basic teaching of Islam namely, what one gives is what they shall receive. Another example, which confirms this Hadith is found in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you...”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that the one who shows mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by the Creator. Generally speaking, in this material world a person receives things according to their efforts. Yet, strangely some expect to obtain the high ranks of Paradise without any effort. These teachings clearly show that a muslim will receive blessings and mercy based on their efforts. The more obedient they are to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, the more they will receive in return. There is no doubt that Allah, the Exalted, can give whatever He wants to whomever He wants irrespective of how much or little they strive in His obedience but Allah, the Exalted, has set up a system which must be followed namely, striving in His obedience in order to obtain more blessings and mercy. Therefore, each muslim must reflect and decide how much mercy and blessings of Allah, the Exalted, they desire and then strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, accordingly.

This reality is clearly described in the final part of this Hadith where Allah, the Exalted, indicates that the more one strives in achieving His proximity, through His sincere obedience, the more of His mercy they shall receive.

Two Blessings

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that there are two blessings people often do not appreciate until they lose them namely, good health and free time.

Good health is a special blessing as it allows a person to take advantage of gaining other blessings related to the world and religion. One of the wisdoms behind minor illnesses is that they should inspire a muslim to be grateful for good health. True gratitude is when one uses the blessings they possess, in this case good health, in the correct way as prescribed by Islam. One should observe those who have lost their good health either through sickness or through ageing and therefore make use of the good health they possess by striving to gain success in worldly and religious matters while giving priority to religion over the material world. For example, one should use their good health to journey to the Mosques in order to offer their prayers with congregation before a time comes when they desire to do this but do not possess the physical strength to do so. They should keep voluntary fasts, especially during the short days of winter, before they lose their good health. They should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer regularly, as it is the best voluntary prayer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614.

The amazing thing about utilizing one's health correctly is that when they eventually lose it, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to grant them the same reward they used to receive when doing good deeds during their good health. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's,

Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who live in heedlessness will fail to utilize their good health and therefore receive no reward during their good health or when they fall sick.

One aspect of appreciating and showing true gratitude for good health is to help those who have lost their good health according to one's means, such as emotional or financial help. It is important to regularly ponder over the sick, as this will inspire one to use their good health correctly.

Finally, those who utilize their good health correctly will be supported by Allah, the Exalted, during their periods of sickness. Whereas, those who do not, will not receive this support and will therefore become impatient when facing sickness. This negative attitude will only lead to further trouble for them and cause them to lose out on much reward.

Everything in this material can be bought, even through illegal means, except time. It is the single blessing which does not return after it leaves a person. Even though this reality is not denied by anyone irrespective of their faith yet, many muslims do not appreciate and make good use of the time they have been given. Many have adopted the mentality that they will prepare for the hereafter tomorrow. But as each day passes this tomorrow keeps getting delayed until, in many cases, this tomorrow never comes. And they only realize this tomorrow when it is too late meaning, at the time of their death. Those who are fortunate enough to reach this tomorrow during their lives may inhabit the Mosques when they reach elderly age but as they have dedicated so much time and energy to the material world their bodies might be in Mosques yet, their hearts and tongues are still engrossed in the material world. This is obvious to those who regularly attend Mosques. These muslims are

unlikely to learn and act on Islamic teachings because of their elderly age and their worldly mentalities. So they may attend the Mosques yet continue to misuse the blessings they have been granted.

In addition, with the passing of time, in most cases, one's responsibilities only increase, such as marriage and raising children. So delaying preparing for the hereafter until one is supposedly more free is simply foolish. Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world but it does encourage them to make correct use of their time, by taking enough from the material world in order to fulfil their necessitates and responsibilities without extravagance or waste and then dedicate the rest of their efforts to preparing for the permanent hereafter. They should minimize using their time on sinful and vain things, things which will not benefit them in this world or the next, and dedicate more of their time and resources to those things which will benefit them in both worlds. This is how one uses their time correctly. How many muslims can honestly say they dedicate the majority of their efforts to preparing for the eternal hereafter over beautifying their temporal world?

Cravings

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

The first type of craving for wealth is when one has extreme love for wealth and strives without fatigue to acquire it through lawful means. To behave in such a manner is not the sign of a wise person, as a muslim should firmly believe their provision is guaranteed to them and this allotment can never change. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This person will undoubtedly neglect their duties and responsibilities as they are too preoccupied with obtaining wealth. A body which is too busy acquiring wealth will never prepare adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, this person will dedicate so much effort to acquiring more wealth that they may not even get a chance to enjoy it. Instead, they will depart this world and leave it behind for other people to enjoy, even though they will be held accountable for it. This person may acquire wealth lawfully but they will

still not find peace of mind as no matter how much they obtain they will only desire more. This person is needy and therefore, a real pauper even if they possess much wealth. As striving for more wealth involves opening more worldly doors and preoccupations, the more they strive to increase their wealth, the less peace of mind and body they will obtain. And the more they will misuse the blessings they have been granted in their pursuit of their fortune. Only the one who forgets Allah, the Exalted, misuses the blessings they have been granted by Him. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

The only craving which is beneficial is craving for accumulating true wealth namely, righteous deeds in order to prepare for one's day of return.

The second type of craving for wealth is similar to the first type but in addition to it this type of person acquires wealth through unlawful means and fails to fulfil the rights of people, such as the obligatory charity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned against this in many Hadiths. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6576, he warned that this attitude destroyed the past nations as they made unlawful things lawful, withheld the rights of others and killed others for the sake of excess wealth. This person strives for the wealth they are not entitled to which leads to countless major sins. When one adopts this attitude they become intensely greedy. As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, the greedy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3114, warns that extreme greed and true faith will never combine in the heart of a true muslim.

If a muslim adopts this type of craving then the extreme danger of it is clear even to an uneducated muslim. It will destroy their faith until nothing except a little remains. Just like the main Hadith under discussion warns, this destruction to one's faith is more severe than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. This muslim risks losing the little faith they possess at the moment of their death, which is the greatest loss.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and social status.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themselves but if someone receives it without asking for it, they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain

status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it, even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worst type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Important Deeds

In a long Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described some important deeds which muslims must strive to perform. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described fasting as a shield. In another Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 1639, he explains this further by advising that fasting is a shield against fire just like a shield protects a person in a fight.

This could mean that fasting is a protection against the fire of difficulties one faces in this world and the fire of Hell they will encounter in the next. In addition, fasting is a shield against the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as the Holy Quran has declared fasting a means to obtaining righteousness and an aspect of this is refraining from the disobedience Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

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

But it is important to note, fasting acts as a shield as long as one does not damage their fast through evil speech or actions. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2235. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned the fasting person not to behave indecently or quarrel with others in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1894.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, that Allah, the Exalted, does not desire one to leave their food and drink if they fail to abstain from foul speech and actions. This behaviour clearly contradicts the aim of fasting. In reality, a fast should affect every organ of one's body, not just their stomach, by safeguarding them from sins.

A muslim should therefore fulfil all the etiquettes and conditions of a fast by fulfilling their duties and abstaining from sins so that they can implement this behaviour all year round, even when they are not fasting. This is a real fast which leads to piety and a protection from the difficulties of this world and the fire of Hell in the next.

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that charity extinguishes sins like water extinguishes fire. A similar Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 664, advises that charity extinguishes the anger of Allah, the Exalted, and protects a muslim from an evil death. An evil death is when a person dies after losing their faith meaning, as a non-muslim. There is no loss greater than this. This is possibly why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961, that a stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people, far from Paradise and close to Hell.

Muslims should take note and strive to give as much charity as possible. As charity in Islam encompasses so many different physical actions,

such as smiling at someone to make them feel safe, which is advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956, no muslim can excuse themselves from giving charity abundantly. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, observes the quality of a deed over its quantity, one must therefore persist on acts of charity, even if they are small. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, loves the deeds that are regular, even if they are small in size. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6464. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

“If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]...”

The next thing mentioned in the main Hadith highlights the importance of the voluntary night prayer. This Hadith indicates that it erases sins just like charity does.

The voluntary night prayer has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer. The night is when Allah, the Exalted, descends to the Heavens of this world, according to His infinite dignity, and invites people towards His forgiveness and mercy. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6321.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the night prayer. This shows that

those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Qurān] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

All muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, as it helps them to avoid pointless social gatherings and it protects one from many physical illnesses also. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the night prayer by not over eating or drinking, especially before bed, as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themselves during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the central pillar of Islam is establishing the obligatory prayers.

Establishing the obligatory prayers means to fulfil all its etiquettes and conditions correctly, such as offering them on time. It is the most important obligatory duty on each muslim and without it success in this world or the next is virtually unobtainable. This has been made clear in many verses and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618. It clearly warns that establishing the prayers separates belief from disbelief. Those who fail to establish the prayers are at risk of leaving this world without their faith, which is the greatest loss. As Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a person beyond their limits, no muslim has an excuse for not establishing their prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

Failing to establish the obligatory prayers while claiming to try one's best contradicts this truth. And there is no doubt that the Holy Quran is the truth.

As the obligatory prayers are the central pillar of Islam, it indicates that if one fails to establish them their house of Islam will collapse, irrespective

of what other good deeds they do. The obligatory prayers cannot be replaced by any other deed or internal belief. In fact, the obligatory prayers are the most important practical proof of one's internal belief. Without this practical proof one is unlikely to obtain success in this world or the next. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 14:

"...establish prayer for My remembrance."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten."

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is that the foundation of all the teachings of this all-encompassing Hadith is controlling one's tongue. This makes it clear that restraining the tongue, guarding it and keeping it within the limits set by Islam is the source of all good. Therefore, whoever keeps control of their tongue has taken control of their affair. In fact, this Hadith concludes by declaring that speech is the main cause for people entering Hell. This is supported by many other Hadiths, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314, which warns that it only takes one evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. This is because the majority of the

major sins have an element of speech in them and in most cases it is much easier to sin through one's words than their actions. When a muslim corrects their speech, all their actions will become correct but if they fail to do this then they will only destroy their good deeds through their evil speech. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verses 70-71:

"O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins..."

A Muslim must therefore avoid vain speech, as it is a waste of time and will therefore be a great regret for them on Judgement Day. Vain speech is also the main cause of most of the arguments, problems and difficulties a person faces in this world. Vain speech is also often the first step before evil speech, such as lying, backbiting and slander. One must also avoid all forms of evil speech, as it leads to trouble in both worlds. To conclude, a muslim must act on the far reaching advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176, namely, they should either speak good words or remain silent.

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