

Socializing, Justice & Ties of Kinship

PodSeries - Vol 415



Achieve Noble Character

Socializing, Justice & Ties of Kinship

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Socializing, Justice & Ties of Kinship

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses Three Aspects of Noble Character: Socializing, Justice and Ties of Kinship.

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of 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.

Socializing, Justice & Ties of Kinship

Socializing - 1

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.

Socializing - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised 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.

Socializing - 3

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.

Socializing - 4

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.

Socializing - 5

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.

Socializing - 6

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.

Socializing - 7

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 criticizing someone at the wrong time, such as when they are angry, is unlikely to be effective in positively influencing them.

Socializing - 8

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.

Socializing - 9

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.

One of these groups includes 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 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.

Socializing - 10

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.

Socializing - 11

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.

Socializing - 12

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised 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.

Socializing - 13

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."

Socializing - 14

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.

Socializing - 15

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.

Socializing - 16

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised 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.

Socializing - 17

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.

Socializing - 18

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.

Socializing - 19

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.

Socializing - 20

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."

Socializing - 21

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...”

Socializing - 22

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.

Socializing - 23

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."

Socializing - 24

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 fulfill 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.

Socializing - 25

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 people.

A muslim can obtain the love of people by avoiding and 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.

Socializing - 26

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.

Socializing - 27

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.

Socializing - 28

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."

Socializing - 29

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.

Socializing - 30

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.

Socializing - 31

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

Socializing - 32

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.

Socializing - 33

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?

Socializing - 34

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 allow a muslim to enter Paradise in peace.

The final characteristic mentioned 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.

Socializing - 35

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 is 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.

Socializing - 36

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.

Socializing - 37

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.

Socializing - 38

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.

Socializing - 39

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.

One of the things mentioned is that the sign of a true believer is being kind to one's 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.

Socializing - 40

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.

Socializing - 41

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 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.”

Socializing - 42

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.

One these characteristics includes 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 socializing. These problems can be drastically reduced when one socializes with the correct people. In fact, socializing 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 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.

Socializing - 43

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.

Socializing - 44

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 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.

Socializing - 45

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.

Socializing - 46

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.

Socializing - 47

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.

Socializing - 48

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."

Socializing - 49

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.

Socializing - 50

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.

Socializing - 51

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.

Socializing - 52

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.

Socializing - 53

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.

Socializing - 54

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.

Socializing - 55

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.

Socializing - 56

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.

Socializing - 57

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.

Socializing - 58

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.

Socializing - 59

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.

Socializing - 60

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.

Socializing - 61

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.

Socializing - 62

In a long Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the foundation of good 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.

Socializing - 63

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over something which all Muslims hope for. They all hope that on Judgment Day Allah, the Exalted, will put aside, overlook and forgive their past mistakes and sins. But the strange thing is that most of these same Muslims who hope and pray for this do not treat others in the same way. Meaning, they often latch on to the past mistakes of others and use them as weapons against them. This is not referring to those mistakes which have an effect on the present or future. For example, a car accident caused by a driver which physically disables another person is a mistake which will affect the victim in the present and future. This type of mistake is understandably difficult to let go and overlook. But many Muslims often latch on to the mistakes of others which do not influence the future in anyway, such as a verbal insult. Even though, the mistake has faded away yet these people insist on reviving and using it against others when the opportunity presents itself. It is a very sad mentality to possess as one should understand that people are not Angels. At the very least a Muslim who hopes for Allah, the Exalted, to overlook their past mistakes should overlook the past mistakes of others. Those who refuse to behave in this manner will find that the majority of their relationships are fractured as no relationship is perfect. They will always be a disagreement which can lead to a mistake in every relationship. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner will end up lonely as their bad mentality causes them to destroy their relationships with others. It is strange that these very people hate to be lonely yet adopt an attitude which drives others away from them. This defies logic and common sense. All people want to be loved and respected while they are alive and after they pass away but this attitude causes the very opposite to occur. While they are alive people become fed up with them and when they die people do not remember them with true affection and love. If they do remember them it is merely out of custom.

Letting the past go does not mean one needs to be overly nice to others but the least one can do is be respectful according to the teachings of Islam. This does not cost anything and requires little effort. One should therefore learn to overlook and let the past mistakes of people go perhaps then Allah, the Exalted, will overlook their past mistakes on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

Socializing - 64

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the bad characteristic of stubbornness and its negative effects on the one who possesses it and those around them. Even though this characteristic can lead to many problems only a major one will be discussed. Some adopt stubbornness in worldly matters and as a result they do not change their character for the better. Instead, they remain steadfast on their attitude believing this is somehow a sign of their great strength and wisdom. Steadfastness in matters of faith is a praiseworthy attitude but in most worldly matters it is only called stubbornness, which is blameworthy.

Unfortunately, some believe if they change their attitude it demonstrates weakness or it shows that they are admitting their fault and because of this they stubbornly fail to change for the better. Adults behave like immature children by believing that if they change their behaviour it means they have lost while others who remain steadfast on their attitude have won. This is simply childish.

In reality, an intelligent person will remain steadfast on matters of faith but in worldly matters they will change their attitude, as long as it is not sinful, in order to make their life easier. So changing to improve one's life is not a sign of weakness it is in fact a sign of intelligence.

In many cases, a person refuses to change their attitude and expects others in their life to change theirs, such as their relatives. But what often

occurs is that due to stubbornness all remain in the same state which only leads to regular disagreements and arguments. A wise person understands that if the people around them do not change for the better than they should. This change will improve the quality of their life and their relationship with others which is much better than going around in circular arguments with people. This positive attitude will eventually cause others to respect them as it takes real strength to change one's character for the better.

Those who remain stubborn will always find something to be annoyed about which will remove peace from their life. This will cause further difficulties in all aspects of their life, such as their mental health. But those who adapt and change for the better will always move from one station of peace to another. If one achieves this peace does it really matter if others believe they only changed because they were wrong?

To conclude, to remain steadfast on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is praiseworthy. But in worldly matters and in cases where no sin is committed a person should learn to adapt and change their attitude so that they find some peace in this world.

Socializing - 65

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over how some people become overly sad when they are criticised. A Muslim should always remember that there are two types of people. The first are rightly guided as their criticism of others is based on the criticism and advice found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This type will always be constructive and guide one to blessings and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These people will also refrain from over or under praising others. Over praising others can cause them to become proud and arrogant. Under praising others can lead them to becoming lazy and put them off from doing good. This reaction is often observed in children. Praising according to the teachings of Islam will inspire others to strive harder in both worldly and religious matters and it will prevent them from becoming arrogant. Therefore, the praise and constructive criticism of this person should be accepted and acted upon even if comes from a stranger.

The second type of person criticises based on their own desires. This criticism is mostly unconstructive and only shows one's bad mood and attitude. These people often over and under praise others as they act based on their own desires. The negative effects of these two were mentioned earlier. Therefore, the criticism and praise of this person should be ignored in the majority of cases even if it comes from a loved one as it will only cause one to become unnecessarily sad in cases of criticism and arrogant in cases of praise.

It is important to remember that a person who over praises others will often over criticise them too. The rule one should always follow is that they should only accept the criticism and praise based on the teachings of Islam. All other things should be ignored and not taken personally.

Socializing - 66

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about a certain mentality which some Muslims have adopted. It is when a person tells many people about their problems. The issue with this attitude is that when one tells too many people then sharing their problems and seeking advice becomes a means of complaining about their difficulties which is a clear sign of their impatience. In addition, this attitude will only cause one to become confused as the advice they receive will be varied which will cause them to become more and more uncertain of the correct path. Whereas, consulting a few wise people will only cause one's certainty to increase. Repeating one's problems over and over again to many people also causes them to focus too much on their problem which makes it appear bigger and more significant than it really is, even to the point that it causes them to neglect their other duties which only leads to more impatience.

Therefore Muslims, should only consult a few people in respect to their difficulties. They should select these few people according to the advice of the Holy Quran. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 43:

“...So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”

This verse reminds Muslims to consult those who possess knowledge. As consulting an ignorant person only leads to further trouble. Just like a person would be foolish to consult a car mechanic over their physical

health a Muslim should only share their problems with those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only share their problems with those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This is because they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, those who do not fear or obey Allah, the Exalted, might possess knowledge and experience but they will easily advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, which only increases one's problems. In reality, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, possess true knowledge and only this knowledge will guide others through their problems successfully. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge...”

Socializing - 67

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important to note that one should react correctly whenever their advice is not acted upon. When the person seeking advice chooses an unlawful decision which contradicts the advice given to them the advisor should show dislike towards their choice as this is a branch of faith. In fact, disliking something for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. But even then they must stay within the limits of Islam when showing their dislike.

If the choices are between two lawful options and their advice is not acted upon then they should not become annoyed at the one seeking advice as they chose a lawful choice. They should instead respect their decision and not harbour any ill feelings for them nor outwardly show any signs of annoyance, such as telling them they told them so if their decision does not work out for them. People are not Angels they will make mistakes so it is best to be kind to others even if they reject advice. One should instead hope for reward by fulfilling their duty from Allah, the Exalted, by giving good and sincere advice to another.

In addition, the one seeking advice should not ask for advice if they have already made their mind up before hand as this only opens the door for a potential argument if they seek someone's advice only to reject it as it contradicts their pre-determined choice.

Socializing - 68

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the behaviour of some who always strive to extract their full rights and more from others. In this day and age due to ignorance it has become more difficult to fulfil the rights of people, such as one's parents. Even though a Muslim has no excuse but to strive to fulfil them it is important for Muslims to be merciful with each other. As advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6655, Allah, the Exalted, shows mercy to those who are merciful to others.

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they 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 troubling themselves, especially if their 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.

Socializing - 69

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering about the important duty on all Muslims to command good and forbid evil. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah...”

Even though, this is an important duty on each Muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a Muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfils

their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

“...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.”

Socializing - 70

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

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

Allah, the Exalted, clearly commands Muslims to aid each other in any matter which is good and not support each other in any matter which is bad. This is what the righteous predecessors acted on but many Muslims have failed to follow in their footsteps. Many Muslims now observe who is doing an action instead of observing what they are doing. If the person is linked to them for example, a relative, they support them even if the thing is not good. Similarly, if the person has no relationship with them they turn away from supporting them even if the thing is good. This attitude completely contradicts the traditions of the righteous predecessors. They would support others in good irrespective of who was doing it. In fact, they went so far on acting on this verse of the Holy Quran that they would even support those they did not get on with as long as it was a good thing.

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

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

Socializing - 71

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the things which prevent a person from changing for the better. Unfortunately, some people experience tests and times of ease yet, do not change their character in a positive way. Even though, there are many possible causes only one will be discussed in this chapter.

In some cases, people do not change for the better because the people around them do not encourage them to do so. In fact, many people have this habit of only patting others on the back and telling them what they want to hear. They somehow believe this is the character of a good companion and friend. They falsely believe acting in this way is a sign of their deep love and respect for others. But this is completely incorrect as this behaviour only encourages one to continue with their attitude without improving it. There is nothing wrong with providing emotional comfort to others but a good friend will always kindly point out the ways in which their friend or relative can improve their character. This will in fact improve the quality and condition of their companion's life in this world and in the next. While merely patting others on the back will only provide temporary comfort to them but in no way will it improve the situation or their character. The correct attitude is possible to achieve without disrespecting others. This is the duty of a person towards others especially, their relatives. In reality, if a person's friend or relative dislikes their good advice then they do not value their relationship with them. A person should never let anything, such as a person's age, prevent them from speaking the truth and kindly advising them to change their attitude for the better. Even if it is one's own parents they should still fulfil this duty as this behaviour is the essence of treating them kindly. Simply staying quiet just because they are one's parents should not be the attitude of a person unless they know advising them will only lead to further problems for everyone.

A shoulder to cry on is only really useful when it leads to a person changing for the better. Even if a person's attitude in a particular situation is correct none the less there are always lessons they can learn from the situation, which should be pointed out to them by others.

To conclude, one must advise others to do good and turn away from evil and not only provide emotional support by simply patting others on the back. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Socializing - 72

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a thing which people generally complain about, especially parents. During a person's youth due to a lack of responsibilities and sharing a common daily schedule, such as attending the same school, people form strong and close bonds with others, such as siblings or friends. But with the passing of time as the responsibilities of people increase and differ and due to changes in their daily schedule people adopt different characteristics. This causes the bonds between them to weaken and in some cases they become quite distant from one another.

This is often observed in homes which have many siblings or amongst friends. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, created each person with their own unique path in life, which is different from others. This is a sign of His infinite power. Billions of people yet, no two paths are the same. The differences in these paths are the main cause why people drift apart from each other. Best friends become friends only by name. Close siblings become emotionally distant from one another. This is a part of destiny and is truly inevitable. It is important to understand this point as some people can become ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted, because of it. They dislike the changes in their lives which lead to the changes in their relationships with others. But these changes in their lives are something Allah, the Exalted, chose so disliking them is disliking the choice of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should instead see things in a positive way. Meaning, they should have hope that one day in the hereafter the strong fellowship they once shared with someone will once again be forged but to a much higher and unbreakable level. This hope should inspire a Muslim to be more obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience knowing that this outcome will only be granted to His obedient servants. In addition, it will cause a Muslim to desire and

supplicate for their companion to also strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. They will also be rewarded for acting 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. So adopting this mentality will help a Muslim to avoid ingratitude, strive harder in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted and gain more reward all the while hoping they will once again be blessed with a strong bond they once shared with their companion. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 47:

“And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other.”

Socializing - 73

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a strange attitude many people have adopted. When they are questioned about things they are unaware of instead of admitting the truth they give a reply which has little or no foundation in the truth. This can become a serious issue especially in matters connected to Islam. A Muslim may get punished for giving incorrect information which others act on. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. This is because they ignorantly attributed things to Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of these people strange beliefs and customs have become attached to Islam which is a great deviation from the truth brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, many of the cultural customs Muslims have adopted believing them to be a part of Islam occurred because of this ignorant mentality.

These people believe that if they simply admit they do not know something they will appear foolish to others. This mentality in itself is extremely foolish as the righteous predecessors would stress the importance of admitting one's ignorance so that others do not become misguided. In fact, the righteous predecessors would only count the person who behaved in this manner as an intelligent person and counted the one who answered every question posed to them a fool.

This attitude is often observed in elders who often advise their children on issues relating to the world and religion instead of admitting their ignorance and directing them to someone who knows the truth. When elders act in this way they fail their duty in rightly guiding their

dependents which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore, gain correct knowledge, whether worldly or religious, before advising others and in cases they are unaware of something they should admit it as this will not reduce their rank in anyway. If anything Allah, the Exalted, and people will appreciate their honesty.

Socializing - 74

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to understand an important point in respect to advising others. It is the duty of Muslims to advise others towards good and forbid evil but a Muslim should not behave as if they have been put in charge as controllers over others. This attitude only leads to anger and bitterness especially, when others do not follow their advice. It is best for Muslims to discharge their duty by advising others but they should avoid stressing over the outcome of their advice meaning, whether the person acts on their advice or not. If Allah, the Exalted, advised the greatest teacher and guide of mankind namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to stress over the outcome in many places of the Holy Quran how can a Muslim claim or behave as if they have been put in charge of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

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

The Muslim who behaves as a controller will not only become bitter when people fail to follow their advice but it can lead them to giving up advising others which is a duty on all Muslims according to their ability.

In addition, this attitude will also cause Muslims to neglect themselves and their own duties as they are too busy concerning themselves with the duties of others. Therefore, Muslims should remain firm in commanding good

and forbidding evil but refrain from observing and bothering about the outcome of their advice.

Socializing - 75

I had a thought which I wanted to share. It is important for Muslims to offer advice correctly and sincerely as this is an aspect of Islam according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. In lawful matters an aspect of this is that a Muslim should give advice based on the character of the one seeking the advice instead of basing it on their own character. This is in fact a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who gave different advice when questioned about the same thing from different people. This is important as people are different and what one person finds bearable another might not so it is best to give advice based on the questioner's character. This attitude will reduce the chances of one giving a biased opinion which is tailored to their own character and way of life.

In addition, in lawful matters in most cases it is best not to directly advise people what to do instead they should be advised and aided in putting together a list of pros and cons to each possible choice and then make an informed decision based on this list. This will most likely lead to a better and satisfactory outcome and it prevents a person blaming their advisor in the future as they did not advise them directly by telling them to choose a specific option.

Finally, a person should never be ashamed of admitting they are unsure about a matter and should advise others to seek advice from someone more qualified if necessary.

Socializing - 76

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Throughout the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Muslims have been advised to be merciful to others. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924, advises that those who show mercy to the creation will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note, that showing mercy is not only through one's actions, such as donating wealth to the poor. It in fact encompasses every aspect of one's life and interaction with others, such as one's words. This is why Allah, the Exalted, warns those who show mercy to others by donating charity that failing to show mercy through their speech, such as counting their favours done to others, only cancels their reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

True mercy is shown in everything: one's facial expression, one's glance and the tone of their speech. This was the full mercy shown by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and is therefore how Muslims must act.

In addition, showing mercy is so important that Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear in the Holy Quran that even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possessed countless beautiful and noble characteristics yet, the one which attracted the hearts of people towards him and Islam was mercy. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

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

It clearly warns that without mercy people would have fled from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If this was the case in respect to him even though he possessed countless other beautiful characteristics how can Muslims, who do not possess such noble characteristics, expect to have a positive impact on others, such as their children, without showing true mercy?

Simply put, Muslims should treat others how they wish to be treated by Allah, the Exalted, and others, which is undoubtedly with true and full mercy.

Socializing - 77

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

Socializing - 78

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A muslim's duty is to support their political and religious leaders in anything which is praiseworthy in the eyes of Islam, such as the things which benefit the society. As indicated by the verse quoted earlier, this is an aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Socializing - 79

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the good things a famous person who passed away did and those who praised them. It is important for muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

In addition, when one is kind to others they will supplicate for them while they are alive which will benefit them. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6929, that a supplication done for a person in secret is always answered. The one who is kind to people is often aided by others in their time of need. Simply put, how one treats others is how they are treated by people.

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

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

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

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

Therefore, a muslim should be kind to themselves by being kind to others, as in reality, this leads to their own benefit in both worlds. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 6:

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

Socializing - 80

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

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

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

“So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”

To conclude, presenting the truth and accepting it without arguing will improve one’s relationships with others and reduce one’s stress.

Socializing - 81

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

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

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

Socializing - 82

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

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

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

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

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

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

Socializing - 83

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

instead compare this advice to the teachings of Islam and only act on it if Islam approves of it. If it does not approve of it, they must avoid acting on it and kindly advise their companion the right course of action, according to the teachings of Islam.

Socializing - 84

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

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

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

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

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

Socializing - 85

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

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

Socializing - 86

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

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

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

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

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

Socializing - 87

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a mother who discussed how her son's behavior towards her changed after he got married. He neglected his mother and rarely contacted her after he moved away with his wife. But this mother learnt to live with what happened and claimed to understand that people come and go.

The important lesson to learn from this is that when a muslim is blessed with a relationship, such as a child or a sibling, they should understand the true purpose of that relationship and act accordingly. In each case, they should learn and fulfill their responsibilities towards them according to the teachings of Islam to the best of their ability. But more importantly do all this for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as He is the One who has commanded them to fulfill the rights of the people in their lives. If one genuinely acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they will never expect nor demand anything from people. They will not overly rejoice when people do things for them, such as showing gratitude, nor will they grieve if they neglect them. As they fulfilled the rights of the person for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they only seek reward from Allah, the Exalted, not people. This would prevent a person becoming sad or depressed if their relative or friend neglected them after years of helping them. Unfortunately, many muslims form relationships with the wrong intention. They get married and have children for the sake of receiving something back from their spouse and children. In most cases, especially in this day and age, they will be left disappointed if they adopt this attitude. It is important for each muslim to correct their intention and connect with people and forge relationships for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore only seek benefit and reward

from Him. Whoever acts in this manner proves that they have put their trust in Allah, Exalted. The one who puts their trust in Allah, the Exalted, will not be let down in this world or the next. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

Whoever adopts the incorrect intention and forms relationships for the sake of gaining a return from people have put their trust in people. And whoever relies and puts their trust in people will be let down, sooner or later. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 73:

“Weak (indeed) are the seeker and the sought!”

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

Socializing - 88

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

Socializing - 89

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

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

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

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

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

Socializing - 90

Muslims must remain steadfast against their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a soldier

that possesses no weapons to defend themselves would be defeated; an ignorant muslim will have no weapon to defend themselves when facing these attacks which will result in their defeat. Whereas, the knowledgeable muslim is provided with the most powerful weapon which cannot be overcome or beaten namely, sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved through sincerely gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Socializing - 91

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.

Socializing - 92

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.

Socializing - 93

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is commonly observed that when one decides to do a good deed which requires time, energy and even wealth, they are often put off by others. The first hinderer is the Devil, who tries hard to put one off from performing good deeds. The second hinderer is one's inner self, which is accustomed to laziness and greed. The final hinderer is other people. Unfortunately, many of these hinderers are often Muslims who possess weak faith. As their faith is weak, they fail to appreciate the greatness of performing even small good deeds. And their weak faith inclines them towards enjoying worldly pleasures which directly clashes with doing good deeds. So these people often question why a Muslim is trying to do a good deed, especially those deeds which require time, energy and wealth. For example, a Muslim might be determined to create a website which shares Islamic knowledge. Others will often put them off by belittling their plan, as they do not value the importance of good deeds. Those who are determined to give charity will be put off by others who possess weak faith. They will attempt to scare them into keeping hold of their wealth in case they face unforeseen financial difficulties. The examples are endless of how people, especially Muslims with weak faith, put off others from doing good deeds, through belittling what they desire to do.

In cases like this, a Muslim who desires to do something good must choose who they consult wisely. Just like a sick person only consults a doctor, or when someone having car troubles only consults a mechanic, a Muslim must only consult those who possess strong faith. This is the one who learns and acts on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only this

person will appreciate the importance of small good deeds and therefore encourage others to do them. One should not consult a person who does not possess Islamic knowledge, as they will only belittle their plan and ultimately put them off from it, even if their intention is not bad. This advice has been indicated in chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 60:

"...And let them not disquiet you who are not certain [in faith]."

Socializing - 94

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is strange how many people often label others as selfish even though they are the ones being selfish. According to them, being selfish is when one chooses their own happiness while contradicting the choice, opinion and happiness of someone else. This is not selfishness according to Islam unless the rights of others are being violated in one's pursuit of their lawful worldly choice. One must understand that in a situation which directly involves them, such as choosing a spouse for themselves, then making a lawful choice on who to marry according to their own happiness is not selfishness, even if the opinion, choice and happiness of others, such as relatives, are contradicted. In reality, the one who demands others to follow their opinion and happiness, even though the situation does not directly involve them, such as their relative choosing a spouse, is the selfish person. When a lawful situation directly involves a person, they should consider the opinions of others but in no way is it selfish for them to choose what makes them happy, as long as the rights of others are not violated. It is an act of sincerity to others when one puts aside their opinion and choice in situations that does not directly involve them and instead only considers the happiness of the people directly involved in the situation, such as the couple getting married. Whereas, to force one's opinions and choices on others in situations which do not directly involve them is selfish, as the happiness of the people directly involved in the situation is the most important thing, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. It is a shame how many people make others feel bad by accusing them of selfishness, even though they are the selfish ones.

To conclude, as long as the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is avoided, which includes violating the rights of people, a Muslim should choose their choice, opinion and happiness in the situations which directly involve them, as this is not behaving selfishly.

Socializing - 95

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. People often care about and ask others whether they are a good person in respect to their relationship. For example, a mother will ask her child if they think she is a good mother. A person will ask their friend whether they think they are a good friend or not. Being someone society deems good in respect to their relationships should not be the main concern of a Muslim. Their main concern should be whether they are a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, or not. This question cannot be answered by society, culture or fashion. It can only be answered when one compares their behaviour to what is commanded and encouraged in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is even more important to prioritize when one reaches elderly age, as their time on Earth is running out swiftly. The issue with worrying about whether one is defined as good in their relationships with people according to the opinion and standards set by people, culture and fashion, is that these things are fickle and the opinions of people vary drastically. As a result, what one considers a good person in respect to their relationships, such as a good mother, another person will consider them a bad person in respect to that same relationship. For example, one son may consider their mother, a good mother, whereas his sister may consider their mother, a bad mother. This often occurs in society. As a result of this fickleness, one will never please people and therefore they will not find comfort and peace in their opinions.

In addition, the one who is always concerned about people, fashion and culture and their opinions about them in respect to their relationships, will easily neglect their relationship with Allah, the Exalted, which may result in them becoming a bad slave. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls

everything in this world and in the next, the one who fails to become a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will not find peace and success in either worlds, even if they strive hard to obtain the good opinions of people in respect to their worldly relationships.

Finally, even if one obtains the good opinions of people, fashion and culture in respect to their relationships, it will not save them from the consequences of being a bad slave of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Whereas, the one who focuses on being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind, as they will only be concerned with Him and His opinion of them, instead of the varied opinions of countless people. Pleasing One is easier and more satisfying than pleasing many. In addition, the one who tries to be a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will inevitably become a good person in respect to their relationships with people e.g. a good mother, friend, neighbour, etc., as fulfilling the rights of people is an important part of being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted. But the difference between this and the negative attitude of prioritizing the opinions of people, is that this good slave of Allah, the Exalted, will fulfill the rights of people but will not bother about the opinions of people in respect to them and their relationships. They will not care if people consider them bad in respect to their relationships, as most people's opinions are based on worldly standards. They will only care and live by the standards set by Allah, the Exalted. The one who lives like this will not be negatively affected by the bad opinions of people, fashion and culture, in this world or on Judgement Day. For example, a mother may believe her son is a terrible son, as she judges him based on worldly standards. But as he is a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, he fulfils the rights of his mother in this world and her negative opinion of him will not affect him in this world or on Judgement Day, meaning, he will be judged by Allah, the Exalted, as a good son.

To conclude, peace of mind and success lies in prioritizing being a good slave of Allah, the Exalted, and only worrying about His opinion about them. Whereas, anxiety, stress and difficulties in both worlds lie in prioritizing the opinions of people in respect to their relationships.

Socializing - 96

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There is a common misconception which prevents a person from improving their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. People often comment that one should not judge others. Even though this is true to a certain extent, unfortunately, many people have completely twisted its meaning out of context in order to use it as an excuse to avoid improving their behaviour. In reality, judging others is a vital part of every aspect of one's life. For example, a person judges others in order to decide whether to befriend them or not. One judges another in order to decide whether they would make a good spouse for them or not. A person judges a company before applying for a job there. An employer judges candidates in order to find the best one to join their team. A parent judges a range of tutors before hiring one for their child. A business owner will judge another business owner to determine whether to do business with them or not. The examples of judging others in respect to their behaviour, character and actions are virtually limitless. So to claim one should not judge others at all is simply foolish, as one cannot live in this world without judging others.

In respect to Islam, a Muslim must judge the actions of others, otherwise they cannot fulfill the duty of advising good and forbidding evil in society. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh..."

According to the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681, a Muslim cannot perfect their faith without loving, hating, giving and withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. How is this possible to achieve without judging others?

The important duty of aiding others in good and avoiding helping others in bad things cannot be achieved without judging others and their actions. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Many of the examples listed earlier are encouraged by Islam, such as finding a suitable spouse and choosing suitable friends. None of these things can be fulfilled without judging others.

Judging the actions of others according to the teachings of Islam in order to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and to encourage others to do the same is a vital aspect of Islam. In this respect, the judgment of people may seem to come from a person but in reality, it is the judgment of Allah, the Exalted. Something, no Muslim must scorn or criticize.

Judging the ultimate outcome of a person; whether Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them or not or whether they will go to Paradise or not, or judging their intention, are something which a Muslim is not allowed to do, as these things are beyond the knowledge of a Muslim and therefore they have no right to discuss or comment over them.

To conclude, Muslims understand the correct concept of judging others so that they more readily accept the constructive criticism, which is based on the teachings of Islam, from others, so that they improve their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. Behaving in this manner is a vital part of right guidance and success in both worlds.

Socializing - 97

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. One of the major reasons why the relationships of people become fractured and broken over time is due to ignorance. When one does not know the rights that they owe others nor the rights people owe them, according to the teachings of Islam, people begin to expect and demand things they are not entitled to and they fail to fulfill the rights that they owe others also. For example, parents often believe that their children owe them complete obedience and submission meaning, their child must agree with and do whatever their parent suggests. But this is simply not true in Islam. A child does have the right to make their own lawful choices in life, even if it contradicts the opinions of their parents, as long as they maintain good manners towards their parents. The major cause of divorce is when people demand things their spouse does not owe them. Siblings often become estranged as they believe their siblings should also support them in every situation without exception and in ways pleasing to them. The examples are virtually endless.

Ignorance of the rights one is owed and the rights they owe others encourages one to make up these standards according to their own desires, culture and fashion. As the desires of people vary considerably, these fabricated standards are never fulfilled by people. This leads to bitterness between people, which over time leads to fractured and broken relationships.

Muslims must avoid this outcome by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that they know and fulfill the rights they owe others and know the rights people owe them.

In addition, when one gains and acts on Islamic knowledge it will encourage them to behave leniently with others, hoping that Allah, the Exalted, will act leniently with them. This leniency will prevent one from demanding their full rights from others thereby making the lives of others easier, and reducing the risks of arguments. This leniency will also encourage one to let things go whenever they are wronged by others, so that they avoid pettiness. This leads to positivity and peace of mind and prevents fractured and broken relationships. On the other hand, living according to one's own standards causes the opposite to occur. A person easily becomes petty over small issues, they become bitter and continue to hold onto grudges for decades. This leads to enmity, negativity and a pessimistic attitude towards others. All these things prevent peace of mind and lead to fractured and broken relationships.

Muslims must therefore ensure they have healthy relationships with others by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they know and fulfill the rights of people and know the rights people owe them.

Socializing - 98

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. It is important for people to avoid a major cause of fractured and broken relationships. Namely, behaving negatively towards others when they have not committed a sin. This is often observed in families when one treats their relative in such a manner, whereby they often criticize, chide and take digs at them in order to show their disapproval with their life choices and lifestyle. For example, a parent may take digs at their child who married someone they did not approve of, even though no sin was committed. People, especially elders, wrongfully believe that the people they behave negatively towards must love and respect them under all circumstances. But they fail to understand that people are not Angels. If one is chided and criticized enough over things which are not sinful, a day will certainly come where the person dislikes speaking, seeing or socializing with their relative, even if it is their own parent. This does not mean they do not love or respect them. It means that as people are not Angels, the negative attitude creates negative feelings in a person's heart which causes them to feel anxiety and stress whenever they have to deal with their relative who behaves negatively towards them. In order to avoid this stress and anxiety they feel like avoiding their relative, even though they still love and respect them. For example, a person will avoid attending a family event because of this stress and anxiety, as they do not want to be subjected to negative behaviour and comments. This is a very common reaction and consequence of treating others negatively which is often seen within families.

Muslims must not underestimate the long term effect of treating others in a negative way, even if it only involves criticism and negative comments, as this can build up over time and cause their relationship to fracture and

break. When others have not committed any sins, one should not behave negatively towards them and instead accept the life choices they make. They should concentrate on fulfilling the rights of others by treating them how they themselves desire to be treated by others, which includes treating them in a positive way through one's words and actions, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Socializing - 99

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the modern world, one of the things which is heavily emphasized and given a lot of attention to in the lives of all people, is socializing. Islam does not prohibit socializing with others and in fact commands Muslims to fulfill the rights of people, according to the teachings of Islam. None the less, Islam always encourages people to understand the purpose of socializing. The main purpose is to aid one another in practically preparing for the hereafter. This involves aiding and encouraging one another to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This attitude leads to peace of mind 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, society, social media, culture and fashion urges people to connect and socialize for the sake of worldly gain and enjoyment. This attitude defies the purpose of mankind being together on this Earth. Socializing is not an end itself, it is only a means to an end. The ultimate end it to reach the Day of Judgement safely. The example of people being put together in this world for the aim of working together so that they prepare adequately for the hereafter, is like how a team of strangers are put together by a company in order to work together to achieve a business

goal, such as designing, manufacturing and advertising a product. If this team of people failed to remember the purpose of them being together, they will waste time on having fun and other social activities. This will result in them neglecting the purpose of being together and thus their team would be labelled a failure. Similarly, if Muslims fail to understand and fulfill the main reason of socializing then they too will fail to prepare adequately for the hereafter, as they were too busy socializing for worldly reasons. One is allowed to have lawful fun through socializing but they should never behave as if that is the purpose of socializing.

To conclude, people have been put together not to connect to each other as an end goal in itself but to connect to each other so that they can aid each other to connect to Allah, the Exalted. One must never fail to differentiate between the two, otherwise they will completely miss the purpose of being placed together in this world. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, understood this reality and therefore always connected and worked together in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, and as a result they spread justice and peace within society like no other group has ever achieved. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

On the other hand, the one who forgets the purpose of socializing will only cause trouble for themselves in both worlds whenever they socialize with others. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Socializing - 100

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. There is a powerful and misguiding mentality which has taken deep roots within the Muslim community, namely, being heavily influenced by the concept of "what will people say" about one's actions and choices. This mentality is often clothed under the guise of righteousness so that Muslims adopt it. They claim that if someone fails to care about what others say about them then they will become shameless. In reality, shamelessness is rooted in not caring about the divine vision, hearing and judgment of Allah, the Exalted, not the criticism of people, as most of their criticism has no value in the sight of Islam and one can easily hide their shameless behaviour from people.

The mentality of "what will people say" affects and corrupts many aspects of a person's life and faith. Arguably, the most dangerous affect it has is that a Muslim begins to perform good deeds for the sake of people instead of for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. For example, a Muslim will only attend a relative's funeral simply to please their other relatives and not in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This Muslim will find that on Judgement Day they will be told to gain their reward for their insincere good deeds from the people their acted for, which will not be possible to do. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. It is important to note that one should not behave to please people as this is minor polytheism and also leads to the loss of reward, as Allah, the Exalted, is free from any partners.

The mentality of "what will people say" also encourages Muslims to behave in ways that are disliked by Islam, such as being extravagant, wasteful and excessive. For example, the majority of Muslim weddings aim to please the relatives of the married couple, as they fear the criticism of people. This causes them to spend lavishly and wastefully.

This mentality can also encourage one to commit sins in order to protect oneself from the criticism of people.

The mentality of "what will people say" also prevents Muslims from acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their teachings often contradict the silly cultural beliefs and practices Muslims have adopted. Fear of being criticised by people prevents one from abandoning their cultural practices for the sake of the two sources of guidance.

The mentality of "what will people say" also prevents Muslims from making the right choices which will lead to their happiness and well-being. For example, many Muslims remain in abusive marriages simply out of fear of the criticism of people, especially their relatives, if they get divorced.

Finally, the mentality of "what will people say" prevents one from making good lawful choices as they fear the criticism of people. For example, Muslims from certain countries will not let their children marry Muslims from

different countries as they fear the criticism of their relatives, even though the marriage proposals are lawful and good.

It is the duty of a Muslim to act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They must fulfil the rights of people according to the teachings of Islam but this does not mean they should act to please them. It means they must fulfil their rights according to the teachings of Islam whether the people are pleased with them or not. Their pleasure or lack of it is irrelevant. The one who acts according to the pleasure of people will never find peace and happiness in this world nor will they ever obtain the praise of people. Whereas, acting to please Allah, the Exalted, leads to peace and happiness in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

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

Socializing - 101

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation representing the non-Muslim tribe of Thaqif visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to accept Islam. Wahshi, the man who killed Hamza Bin Abdul Mutalib, may Allah be pleased with him, at the Battle of Uhud, joined this delegation in order to secure his safety and accept Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When he reached Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked about what he had done to Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him, and accepted his testification of faith but asked him if he could avoid unnecessarily meeting him in the future, as seeing him reminded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the killing and mutilation of his uncle, Hamza, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 4072.

Even though Wahshi's sins were forgiven, as he accepted Islam, yet the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, requested him to avoid meeting him unnecessarily. First of all, this indicates the human nature of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He felt the same feelings that any other human would feel, such as anger and grief. In addition, this request was a great relief for the Muslim community as it made things easier for the Muslims. If the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, behaved as if Wahshi had done nothing, then it would have forced all the Muslims to behave in this manner, as adopting the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is obligatory. 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...””

The vast majority of Muslims would not be able to deal with others in such a manner. Therefore, the request of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made things easy for them. This corrects the false notion of forgiving and forgetting. This incident proves that humans are not computers, who can erase memories from their minds. People are not expected to forget the actions of others, they are instead encouraged to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and continue to fulfill the rights of others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

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

This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice. Meaning, a Muslim should forgive others and fulfill their rights, but they should not blindly trust others, especially when they have been wronged by them in the past. Ignoring the past actions of others may well encourage them to behave in the same way in the future. Therefore, Muslims must learn from this incident and learn to forgive others and strive to fulfill their rights but they are not expected to forget the actions of others nor blindly trust them.

Socializing - 102

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Prior to Islam women would themselves be counted as something which was inherited by others. Islam abolished this unjust practice and gave them rights which surpassed any other society.

On a general note, before Islam, in the age of ignorance, it was common practice for women to be equated with articles of home use. They would be bought and sold like cattle. A woman had no rights in respect to marriage. Far from being entitled to some share in the inheritance from her relatives, she herself was treated as a piece of the inheritance like other household items. She was considered as something owned by men while she was allowed to own nothing. And she could only spend according to the wishes of a man. Whereas, the man could spend any wealth which should belong to her, like wages, according to his desires. She did not even have the right to question this method. Some groups from Europe even considered women not to be a human and equated her with an animal. Women had no place in religion. They were considered unfit for worship. Some even declared women to possess no souls. It was considered completely normal for a father to kill his newborn or young daughter as they were seen as a shame on the family. Some even believed that no act of justice would be taken against the one who killed a woman. Some customs even killed the wife of a dead husband as she was not seen fit enough to live without him. Some even declared that the purpose of women was only to serve men.

But Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught man to respect all people, made justice and equity the law and men were made responsible for fulfilling the rights of women parallel to their own rights on them. Women were made free and independent. She became the owner of her own life and property, just like men. No man can force a woman to marry someone. If she is forced to without her consent then it becomes her choice to continue the marriage or annul it. No man has a right to spend anything from what belongs to her without her consent and approval. After the death of her husband or after divorce she becomes independent and she cannot be compelled by anyone to do anything. She gets a share in the inheritance like men according to the responsibilities given to her by Allah, the Exalted. To spend on women and treat them well has been declared an act of worship by Allah, the Exalted. All these rights and more have been given to women by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is strange how those who stand up for women's rights today criticize Islam even though it gave women rights centuries earlier.

Socializing - 103

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over how the human heart was created in such a way that it must have something in it, it can never be empty. Meaning, it must attach to and love something. This is quite obvious if one reflects on this point for a moment. Some people love other people, some love animals, some their career and others love other things. But no matter how much a person loves something eventually a day will come where they will have to say goodbye. Whether this is done voluntarily for example, a person retiring from their career, or forcefully such as death cutting one off from their beloved. It is the reason why some of those who separated from what they loved while they were alive, such as an athlete retiring from their sport, became bitter as their heart and mind continued being attached to their beloved thing but their body could no longer keep up with it. They become bitter as their moment in the spotlight passes and they are forced to move on from their love. This is a universal principle which applies to all irrespective of one's belief or social status. But the only love which strengthens with time and in death is the sincere love for Allah, the Exalted. There is no goodbye for the one who possesses this love only anticipation for the destined meeting which is beyond words to describe. This love only strengthens with the passing of time while all other bonds weaken and eventually break. Therefore, a Muslim should fulfil their duty and responsibilities in respect to the creation but only truly love Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience to Him which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. The one who achieves this will never need to say goodbye.

Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 27-28:

“[To the righteous it will be said], "O reassured soul. Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him].””

Socializing - 104

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often claim that as they are very busy in their worldly activities they find it difficult to do voluntary righteous deeds especially, those related to people, such as physically supporting someone. Even though Muslims should strive to perform as much voluntary righteous deeds as possible as it will benefit them in both worlds whereas, their worldly activities will only benefit them in this world none the less, the least these Muslims should do is adopt a neutral mentality towards others. This means that if a Muslim cannot help others they should not hinder them in their lawful and good activities. If they cannot make others happy they should not make them sad. If they cannot make others laugh they should not make them cry. This can be applied to countless scenarios. This is important to understand as many Muslims might do good to others, such as provide them emotional support, but at the same time they destroy their good deeds by being negative towards people. It is important to note, if a Muslim is excessive in being negative towards others it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Having a neutral mentality is actually a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

To conclude, it is best to treat others in a positive way which is a sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. But if they cannot do this the least they should do is treat others in a neutral way. As treating others in a negative way may well lead to one's destruction.

Justice - 1

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.

Justice - 2

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

Ties of Kinship - 1

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.

Ties of Kinship - 2

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.

Ties of Kinship - 3

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.

Ties of Kinship - 4

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a mentality which many people especially, Asians possess. It is the extreme need in forcing people such as relatives to remain physically together. Even though, it is not an evil intention yet, in this day and age it often leads to more trouble than good. As people are not perfect they will make mistakes which upset others such as their relatives. But if this person only met and conversed with their relatives once in a while there is a much greater chance the mistake will be overlooked by others so that it does not become a point of argument. But if this same person was constantly around their relatives it would be much more likely their attitude and behaviour would lead to arguments and friction amongst their relatives. In other words, a person is less likely to argue and more likely to be tolerant with someone they only see once in a while than someone they are always around. This is a fact which everyone will understand if they ponder over it. Unfortunately, some people do not understand that it is better to be physically separated but be at peace with one another than be together in conflict and friction. Arguments only lead to mental separation which often has more of a negative effect on families than physical separation. Whereas, being physically separated does not lead to a mental separation. In fact, it often leads to greater mutual respect and appreciation. As the famous saying goes separation makes the heart grow fonder.

It is important to note, that it is the duty of a Muslim to uphold their ties of kinship irrespective of if they are physically with their relatives or not. But this discussion means that Muslims should not believe a bit of physical

separation between people is a bad thing. It in fact can be a cause for the bonds between them to strengthen.

Ties of Kinship - 5

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a problem which affects most Muslim families. With the passing of time they become divided and lose the strong connection they once had with one another. There are many causes of this but a major cause is the foundation on which their connection was formed by their parents and relatives. It is commonly known that when the foundation of a building is weak the building will either get damaged over time or even collapse. Similarly, when the foundation of bonds connecting people are not correct the bonds between them will eventually weaken or even break. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, together he formed the bonds between them for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, most Muslims today bring people together for the sake of tribalism, brotherhood and to show off to other families. Even though, the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not related but as the foundation of the bonds connecting them was correct namely, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their bonds grew from strength to strength. Whereas, many Muslims nowadays are related by blood yet, with the passing of time become separated as the foundation of their bonds was based on falsehood namely, tribalism and similar things.

Muslims must understand that if desire for their bonds to endure and to earn reward for fulfilling the important duty of upholding the ties of kinship and the rights of non-relatives then they must only forge bonds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of this is that people only connect with one another and act together in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the

Exalted. This has been commanded in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Ties of Kinship - 6

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

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

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

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

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

This news documentary also discussed how some drug dealers fabricate or misinterpret the verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to justify what they do. This is absurd, as Islam clearly prohibits anything which causes harm to oneself and others, such as dealing or taking illegal drugs. They even claim that selling illegal drugs to non-muslims is acceptable. But this completely challenges the teachings of Islam, as a muslim must treat everyone with kindness and respect, irrespective of their faith. In fact, one cannot be a true muslim or a believer until they keep their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. If a muslim does not have permission to disrespect the gods of other religions, how can Islam encourage muslims to mistreat people from other faiths? Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 108:

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

Behaving in this manner was in fact something the previous nations did and Allah, the Exalted, harshly criticized them over it. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 75:

“And among the People of the Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount [of wealth], he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a [single] coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him [demanding it]. That is because they say, "There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned." And they speak untruth about Allāh while they know [it].”

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

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

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

Ties of Kinship - 7

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

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

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

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

Ties of Kinship - 8

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.

Ties of Kinship - 9

Upholding the ties of kinship is a vital aspect of Islam which cannot be abandoned if one desires success in both worlds. A true sign of one's faith is not spending all day worshipping Allah, the Exalted, in a Mosque but it is to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and to fulfill the rights of the creation. One of the most important rights of the creation is to uphold the ties of kinship. One can feign piety by dressing Islamically but they cannot deceive Allah, the Exalted. When one turns the pages of history they will always observe that the pious servants of Allah, the Exalted, maintained their ties of kinship. Even when their relative's mistreated them they still responded with kindness. 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.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6525, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, will always aid the one who strives to maintain their ties of kinship even if their relatives make things difficult for them.

Replying good with good is not special whereas, replying good to evil is the sign of a sincere believer. The former behavior is even seen in animals. In

most cases, when one treats an animal kindly it will in turn show affection back. It is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5991, that the one who truly upholds the bonds of kinship is the one who maintains ties even when their relatives sever them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was constantly terrorized by most of his relatives but he always showed kindness towards them.

It is commonly known that one cannot achieve success without the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. But in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5987, Allah, the Exalted, has clearly declared that He will sever bonds with the one who cuts their ties of kinship over worldly reasons. Bear in mind, this is true irrespective of how much one struggles to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship such as, the obligatory prayers. If Allah, the Exalted, cuts ties with a muslim how can they achieve His closeness and eternal success?

In addition, in most cases Allah, the Exalted, delays the punishment of sins in order to give people the opportunity to repent. But breaking the ties of kinship over worldly reasons is punished swiftly. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4212.

Unfortunately, severing ties is commonly seen in the world today. People easily sever ties of kinship over petty worldly reasons. They fail to recognize that any loss which occurs in the material world is temporary but if they are disconnected from Allah, the Exalted, they will face prolonged suffering in both worlds.

A reason for breaking the ties of kinship which is commonly seen within the Islamic community is when one reaches a higher social status through their occupation. This inspires them to discard their relatives as they believe they are not worthy of interacting with them anymore. Their love for their wealth and social status pushes them to the doors of paranoia which convinces them that their relatives only wish to take their wealth from them.

The Holy Quran indicates that these bonds will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 1:

“...And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever over you, an Observer.”

This verse also clearly indicates that one cannot obtain piety without upholding the ties of kinship. So those who believe they can achieve it through excess worship and fasting are proven wrong and must therefore change their behaviour.

Islam teaches muslims to uphold all ties of kinship by aiding their relatives in matters which are good whenever and wherever possible. They have been ordered to adopt a constructive mindset which unites relatives for the

benefit of society rather than a destructive mentality which only causes divisions within families. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, creating divisions amongst people leads to one's destruction.

Those who sever their ties of kinship have been cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verses 22-23:

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allah has cursed...”

How can one achieve their lawful desires in this world or in the next when they are encompassed with the curse of Allah, the Exalted, and deprived of His mercy?

Islam does not order one to go beyond their means in supporting their relatives nor does it ask them to sacrifice the limits of Allah, the Exalted, for their relatives as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2625. Therefore, one should never join their relatives in acts of evil. In this case, a muslim should command their relatives to do good and gently forbid them from evil while maintaining respect for them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

Countless benefits are obtained by the one who maintains the ties of kinship for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who maintains ties will be blessed with extra grace in their provision and in their life. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1693. This means that their provision irrespective of how little it is will be enough for them and it will provide them with peace of mind and body. Grace in life means they will find time to fulfill all their religious and worldly duties. These are two blessings Muslims spend their whole life and wealth trying to obtain but many fail to recognize that Allah, the Exalted, has placed both of them in maintaining ties of kinship.

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered Muslims to fulfill this vital duty even with their non-Muslim relatives. A Hadith advising this is found in Sahih Muslim, number 2324.

One of the traps of the Devil is that he aims to create dissension between relatives and within society which leads to broken families and social divisions. His ultimate goal is to weaken Islam as a nation. Unfortunately, some have become infamous for harboring grudges which go on for decades and pass on from generation to generation. A person will treat a

relative well for decades but over one mistake and argument the latter will vow never to speak to them again. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6526, that it is unlawful for a muslim to cut off ties from another muslim over a worldly issue for more than three days. If this is the command regarding severing ties with a non-relative can one imagine the seriousness of severing ties with relatives? This question has been answered in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared that the one who severs ties with a relative over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise.

One must reflect on the verses and Hadiths which discuss this important topic and realize that if after decades of sins Allah, the Exalted, does not close His doors or sever links with people why do people so easily turn their backs on their relatives over small worldly issues? This must change if one desires for their connection to Allah, the Exalted, to remain intact.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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