Life of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

PodBio – Vol 2

Achieve Noble Character

Life of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

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Life of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Compiler's Notes

Introduction

Life of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Life in Mecca Before Accepting Islam

Importance of Education

Under Your Care

Ease After Difficulties

Importance of Earning

Judging with Justice

Ambassadors of Islam

Worshipping Desires

Feeling Empathy

Umar (RA) Finding Islam

Supporting Islam

Steadfastness in Faith

Avoiding Stubbornness

True Belief

Recognizing Good from Evil

Life in Mecca After Accepting Islam

Choosing a Different Path

Minding Your Business

Acting on the Truth

Protecting Yourself

The Migration to Medina

Life in Medina During the Lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The 1st Year After Migration

Construction of Masjid Nabawi in Medina

A Beautiful Legacy

The Call to Prayer

Call to Success

Sincerity to Others

Brotherhood

Sensible Questions

Deep Understanding

Just Punishment

Perfecting Faith

Visiting Others

Key to All Evil

Adhering to True Guidance

Striving for Knowledge

A True Believer

Detachment from the World

Caring for Others

Prioritising Correctly

Leading by Example

Strong Faith

Key to Paradise

Reducing Evil Influences

Loving for Allah (SWT)

Embodying Truthfulness

Avoiding Greed

The 2nd Year After Migration

The Battle of Badr

Standing Firm

Uncompromising in Faith

True Love

The 3rd Year After Migration

The Battle of Uhud

Facing Difficulties and Hardship

Obedience in Difficulties

A Suitable Spouse

The 4th Year After Migration

The Banu Nadir

Forgoing Revenge

The Second Badr

The 5th Year After Migration

The Battle of Ahzab

An Exit

The Banu Qurayza

Treason

The 6th Year After Migration

Two Tongues of Fire

Benefit Yourself

Slander of Aisha (RA) – Wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Letting Things Go

The Pact of Hudaibiya

Supporting the Truth

The Pledge of Ridwan

Pledge of Servanthood

Remaining Firm

A Clear Victory

Evil Plots Fail

The 7th Year After Migration

The Battle of Khaybar

Your Legacy

The Visitation (Umra)

Humility Without Weakness

The 8th Year After Migration

The Conquest of Mecca

Sincerity to Islam First

Observing Others with Mercy

Compassion

The Battle of Hunayn

Steadfast in Difficulty

The Siege of Taif

Leniency and Second Chances

Objecting to Evil

The 9th Year After Migration

The Battle of Tabuk

True Devotion

Patience and Contentment

A Blessed Grave

Prophetic Sermon at Tabuk

A Comprehensive Advice

The 10th Year After Migration

The Farewell Holy Pilgrimage

Do No Harm

The 11th Year After Migration

The Final Illness of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Practical Role Models

Most Knowledgeable

Mutual Consultation

Guarding Prophethood

Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Devotion to Allah, the Exalted

Life After the Death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Speech of Abu Bakkar (RA)

Remaining Obedient

Electing Abu Bakkar (RA) as Caliph

Supporting the Truth

Concentrating on More Relevant Issues

A Fine Sermon

The Apostate Wars

Leaving Stubbornness

A Worthy Leader

Holding Onto Faith

Justice

Compiling the Quran

Gathering the Quran

Nominating Umar Ibn Khattab (RA) as Next Caliph

For the Greater Good

Fearing Leadership

Obeying in Good Things

Sending Ahead Good

A Final Counsel

The Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

A Humble Caliph

A Humble Sermon

A Beautiful Sermon – 1

A Beautiful Sermon – 2

A Beautiful Sermon – 3

A Simple Life

The Commander of the Faithful

Guiding Others

Mercy and Compassion

Blessing or a Curse

Consulting Others

Good Companions

The People of the Quran

Levels of Knowledge

Justice for All

Equality

The Year of Ashes (Famine)

One Body

Nobility

The Law Applies to All

Removing Bad Elements

Importance of Education

Protecting Others

Fair Treatment

Freedom of Expression

Equal Treatment

Accepting the Truth

Hate vs Freedom of Expression

Over Praising

Trustworthy

The Islamic Calendar

Fear of the Last Day

Taking Stock of Oneself

The Scales

Avoiding the Fire

The Correct Perception

Temporary vs Eternal

The Shade of a Tree

Company of the Greats

The Best

Becoming Pious

The Slave of Allah (SWT)

Serving the People

Self-Reflection

Acknowledging Others

Taking Revenge

Sincerity to Allah (SWT)

No Advantage

Love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Respect for Knowledge

Honouring Women

Accepting Advice & Criticism

Protecting the Rights of Women

Reasons for Marriage

Judging Others

Honouring Others

Seeking Good Companionship

Nobility Lies in Faith

Mistreating Others

Helping the Needy

Balanced Diet

Encouraging Exercise

Gentleness in all Matters

Avoiding Disunity

Maintaining the Purity of Islam

Trusting in Allah (SWT)

Avoiding Fanaticism

Establishing the Obligatory Prayers

The Reviver of Religion

Means to Salvation

Avoiding Usury

Earning Provision

Patrolling Medina

Concern for Others

Family Ties

Helping Others

Cure for Corruption

Compassion to All Creatures

Verifying Information

Gaining Knowledge

A Beautiful Sermon – 4

Beneficial Conversations

Honouring Parents

Changes to the Two Holy Mosques

Best Places on Earth

For the Travelers

Improving Trade Routes

Islamic Cities

Good Spending

Avoiding Pride

True Gratitude

Food Banks

Gentleness with Strictness

Taking Precautions is Trusting

The Major Plague

Accepting Destiny

Parting Advice

Parting Advice – 2

Fulfilling Duties

Dealing Fairly

Following the Truth

Noble Behaviour

Financial Matters

Adapting Behaviour

Fear for the Nation

A Lesson for Judges

Righteous Judges

Minimizing Errors

Detachment from Worldly Things

Ignorance

The Superior Ones

Importance of Consultation

Equal Treatment

Balanced Mental State

Avoiding Anger

Avoiding Bribes

Good Treatment

Neighbours

Where Greatness Lies

Desiring Leadership

Life is a Mirror

Accountability

Terms of Employment

Avoiding Blind Trust

Advice to a Leader

Ascetics

Humility

Adopting Piety

Avoiding Envy

Muslim Manners

Misusing Funds

Visiting Paradise

Importance of Equality

Steadfast Attitude

Monitoring Others

Implementing Justice

Love with Strictness

The Decree of Allah (SWT)

Times of Grief

Expedition Against the Persians

Guiding Others

Advice to a General

Second Chances

Slaves of the World

Fulfilling Promises

A Powerful Advice

A Beautiful Sermon – 5

Thinking About Others

A Wise Advice

Spiritual Advice

A Call to Faith

Empowerment

Battle of Qadisiyyah

Remaining Firm

Truly Rich

Following the Truth

No Concessions

Overlooking Faults

Leading with Truthfulness

Simplicity

Avoiding Treachery

The Test of Success

Tests through Ease

Following Desires

Agree to Disagree

Importance of Practicing Faith

A Sincere Leader

Controlling Anger

Expedition Against the Romans

An Honest Description

Advice to a Leader

Importance of Perception

Eliminating Envy

Honour and Humiliation

Superiority and Success

A Traveller

The Sincere Soldiers

Financial Dealings

Expedition to Egypt

Fixing Not Corrupting

An Act of Gratitude

Attitude of the Muslims

All Are Equal

How to Live

Strength of Muslims

Loving for Others

Striving for Allah (SWT)

Kind Treatment

Homes of Allah (SWT)

Religious Freedom

Preferring the Hereafter

A Reminder

Nobility is in Faith

Qualities of Leadership

Assassination of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Slave of the World

Sincerity to the Prayer

Fearing Accountability

Humility

Regrets

The Best Companionship

Grieving for Others

The Counsel for the Caliphate

Rulership

Final Commands

Final Advice

A Fine Role Model

Good Companionship

Nominating Uthman Ibn Affan (RA) as Caliph

The Next Caliph

A Truthful Eulogy

Conclusion

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some lessons from the Life of the Great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Second Rightly Guided Caliph of Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him.

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.

Life of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Life in Mecca Before Accepting Islam

Importance of Education

Even during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, learned to read Arabic, which was very rare at that time. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 44.

His attitude clearly indicates the importance of gaining and acting on knowledge.

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

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

Under Your Care

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had a harsh childhood. He would tend to the camels of his father, Al Khattab, who would exhaust him and beat him if he failed to complete his chores. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 45.

The harsh treatment of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, during his childhood had a negative impact on him as he became a harsh adult during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. Muslims must strive to avoid treating those under their care in this manner and instead fulfill the duty of raising them in the correct way, according to the teachings of Islam.

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 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 and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

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.

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.

Ease After Difficulties

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had a harsh childhood. He would tend to the camels of his father, Al Khattab, who would exhaust him and beat him if he failed to complete his chores. During his Caliphate, he once mentioned his rough childhood and then commented that even though he faced that he was eventually taken to a stage where there was no person between him and Allah, the Exalted, meaning, no one had authority over him as he was the Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 45.

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

"…Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief]."

It is important for Muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes

all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“…And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham."

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that Muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for Muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient Muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

Importance of Earning

During his childhood, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, worked as a shepherd for his father and his aunts. Later on, he became a trader who undertook many business trips. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 45-47.

This indicates the importance of earning one's lawful provision.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to

cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Judging with Justice

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was always eager to learn about the life, circumstances and customs of the Arabs, people would come to him to resolve their disputes. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 47.

Judging between people is an important matter in Islam therefore, one must always strive to be just in all their decisions.

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. 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 themself 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. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which 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.[1] 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 which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. 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.

Ambassadors of Islam

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was wise, eloquent, well spoken, strong, noble and clear in speech, he was selected as the ambassador for the ruling tribe of Mecca, the Quraish. If there was a dispute between the tribe of Quraish and someone else, they would send Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to discuss the situation on their behalf. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 47-48.

This should remind Muslims of their role as the ambassadors of Islam. It is extremely important for Muslims to fulfil this duty according to their potential. The best way to achieve this is by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with His choices. Islam spread across the entire globe because the righteous predecessors took this duty very seriously. When they gained and acted on beneficial knowledge the outside world recognised the truthfulness of Islam through their behaviour. This caused countless people to enter the fold of Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims today believe that showing others about Islam is merely in one's appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf. This is only an aspect of representing Islam. The greatest part is by adopting the characteristics of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed in the Holy Quran and his traditions. Only with this attitude will the outside world observe the true nature of Islam. A Muslim should always remember that adopting an Islamic appearance while possessing characteristics which oppose the teachings of Islam only causes the outside world to disrespect Islam. They will be held accountable for this disrespect as they are the cause of it. A Muslim

should therefore behave as a true ambassador of Islam by adopting the inward teachings of Islam as well as the outer appearance of Islam.

In addition, this important position should remind Muslims that they will be held accountable and questioned whether they fulfilled this role or not on Judgment Day. The same way a king would become angry at their diplomat and representative if they failed to fulfil their duty so will Allah, the Exalted, become angry with the Muslim who fails to fulfill their duty as an ambassador of Islam.

Worshipping Desires

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was brought up in a harsh manner and as he possessed a great love for the ways and customs of his people, he initially strongly opposed Islam. He feared Islam would disrupt the system that was established in Mecca, a system which gave Mecca its superiority amongst the Arab people. This system ensured the Meccans were treated with respect and was the reason for their prosperity. This is one of the main reasons why the rich and influential from the non-Muslims of Mecca opposed Islam the most. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 48.

The truth is that each worshipper of false gods only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themself decides how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. They advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them.

Feeling Empathy

As the violence of the non-Muslims of Mecca against the socially weak Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, increased, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised some of them to migrate to Ethiopia. He advised them that their king was a just man and they would not face persecution there. Several Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, departed, leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 1-2.

When a group from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were heading out of Mecca, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, questioned their activities. They told him they were leaving Mecca as they were fed up of him and the other non-Muslims who constantly persecuted them. Instead of showing his typical harshness, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke some kind words which gave them the impression he would miss them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 49-50.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was harsh with them yet his harshness was not rooted in evil rather, it was rooted in a misplaced loyalty to the non-Muslims of Mecca and their misguided ways. It seems, he only behaved the way he did as he desired his people to be united, as they were before the coming of Islam.

Generally speaking, having this type of empathy for others is an important aspect of Islam. It was most likely the first emotion which encouraged Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to rethink his attitude towards Islam, as his behaviour was driving away his own people from their homes. Whereas, many of the other non-Muslims of Mecca were only concerned about protecting their way of life out of greed for wealth and authority and therefore, they rejoiced over the departing Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

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 thereby failing 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 to 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 instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themself 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.

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.

Umar (RA) Finding Islam

Supporting Islam

Shortly before Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, to support Islam through whoever out of the following two men was dearer to Him: Abu Jahl or Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. The most dearer to Him was Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3681.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, supported Islam as he adopted sincerity. Muslims must follow in his footsteps.

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

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

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

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

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

Being sincere towards Allah, the Exalted, means that one should always choose His pleasure over the pleasure of themself and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah,

the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere Muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one’s relationship with these people. This is all

summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

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

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

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

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

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

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

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themself in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain

things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Steadfastness in Faith

Prior to accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was encouraged to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he left their meeting with his sword searching for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he met Nu'aym Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who attempted to direct his attention away from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He rebuked Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, by informing him that members of his own family had accepted Islam: his sister, brother-in-law and cousin. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then headed for his sister's house. He overheard them reciting the Holy Quran and after entering her house they initially denied what they were doing. Eventually, they defiantly declared their Islam even though it led to them being beaten by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 51-53.

Even in the face of violence and oppression the sister of Umar, Fatima Bint Al Khattab, and her husband Sa'eed, may Allah be pleased with them, remained firm on their faith.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition

are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties then when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Avoiding Stubbornness

Prior to accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was encouraged to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he left their meeting with his sword searching for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he met Nu'aym Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who attempted to direct his attention away from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He rebuked Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, by informing him that members of his own family had accepted Islam: his sister, brother-in-law and cousin. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then headed for his sister's house. He overheard them reciting the Holy Quran and after entering her house they initially denied what they were doing. Eventually, they defiantly declared their Islam even though it led to them being beaten by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Eventually, Umar, may be pleased with him, calmed down and requested his sister to show him what they were reciting. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 51-53.

After witnessing the steadfastness of his relatives Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, put aside his stubbornness and decided to properly investigate their belief.

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.

True Belief

Prior to accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was encouraged to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the leaders of the non-Muslims of Mecca. When he left their meeting with his sword searching for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he met Nu'aym Ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who attempted to direct his attention away from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He rebuked Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, by informing him that members of his own family had accepted Islam: his sister, brother-in-law and cousin. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then headed for his sister's house. He overheard them reciting the Holy Quran and after entering her house they initially denied what they were doing. Eventually, they defiantly declared their Islam even though it led to them being beaten by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Eventually, Umar, may be pleased with him, calmed down and requested his sister to show him what they were reciting. She commanded him to first wash himself, as he was unclean. After doing that, he took the paper that they were reciting and began to recite chapter 20 Taha of the Holy Quran. During his recitation the light of faith penetrated his spiritual heart. He then asked about the whereabouts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Khabbab, may Allah be pleased with him, was hiding within their home and after witnessing the truth penetrating the spiritual heart of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, he revealed himself and told him about the supplication of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made for his guidance or the guidance of Abu Jahl. This supplication has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3681. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then headed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was with his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. When he reached the place, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were initially scared but let him in. The

Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, seized him desiring to protect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but the latter commanded them to let him go. Then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, enquired about his intention, at which point Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, declared his Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 51-56.

It is obvious from the life of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that when he accepted Islam, he not only verbally declared faith in it but practically followed and obeyed its teachings. This must be the attitude of every Muslim.

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

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe

they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

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

Recognizing Good from Evil

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, fully understood the ways and customs of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and out of love for them and the worldly benefits they brought, he defended them with all his strength. But after accepting Islam, he understood its beauty and true nature and therefore recognized the clear difference between good and evil; guidance and misguidance; and truth and falsehood. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 48.

This indicates the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge, as ignorance prevents one from recognizing good from evil and truth from falsehood.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

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

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themself from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

Life in Mecca After Accepting Islam

Choosing a Different Path

After accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, visited his maternal uncle Abu Jahl. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told him that he had accepted Islam. Abu Jahl angrily returned into his home and slammed the door in his face. The same thing happened when he visited another noblemen from amongst the non-Muslims of Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 57.

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

This is a common reaction from people for when a person chooses a different path in life from others it makes them feel as if their path is bad or evil and this is the reason the person has chosen a different path. Even though the person does not believe this but only chooses a different path believing it is better for them yet they will still face criticism. It is the same reason all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were criticised by their people as they chose and passively invited others to a different better path.

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

Minding Your Business

After accepting Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, went around the gatherings of the non-Muslims, which were close to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, announcing his conversion to Islam. Each time he would announce to a group his conversion to Islam they would attack him but he would repel them, as he was a strong man. This went on for some time and eventually a noblemen from the non-Muslims of Mecca, Al Aas Ibn Wa'il As Sahmi, enquired about what was going on. He was told Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had accepted Islam. He replied that they should leave him alone as a person should be free to choose their own religion. He added that if they killed Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, his tribe, the Banu Adiyy, would take revenge on his behalf. So as a result the non-Muslims left him alone. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 57-58.

Al Aas, might have been a non-Muslim yet he spoke the truth. Minding one's business is a key branch of Islam.

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

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

A major aspect of avoiding the things which do not concern a person is linked to speech. The majority of sins occur when a person utters words which do not concern them, such as backbiting and slander. The definition of vain talk is when a person utters words which may not be sinful but are useless and therefore not their concern. As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2408, vain speech is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Countless arguments, fights and even physical harm have occurred simply because someone spoke about something which did not concern them.

Many families have become divided; many marriages have ended because someone did not mind their business. It is why Allah, the Exalted, has advised in the Holy Quran the different types of useful speech which people should concern themselves with. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 114:

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

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

Therefore, Muslims should strive to avoid the things which do not concern them through words and actions so that they can perfect their faith. Put simply, the one who dedicates time to the things which do not concern them will fail in the things which do concern them. And the one who occupies themself with the things which do concern them will not find time

to spend on the things which do not concern them. Meaning, they will achieve success through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Acting on the Truth

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted Islam he convinced the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to pray openly at the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca, with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This was not possible to do before as their numbers, social power and influence was too small and weak. The non-Muslims of Mecca dared not to attack them when they saw Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, with them. After this the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the title of Al Farooq to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, meaning, the one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 63.

Muslims must strive to follow in his footsteps by adopting truthfulness in all aspects of their lives.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Protecting Yourself

As the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were socially weak they could not pray at the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, until Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, became Muslim. When he became Muslim he defended the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from harm and kept fighting the non-Muslims of Mecca until they left the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, alone. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 59.

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 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 themself 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 which 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.

But 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.

The Migration to Medina

After the violence against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, escalated further he gave the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, permission to migrate to Medina. Covertly, they began to migrate to Medina leaving behind everything they owned and knew.

The only person who did not migrate in secret was Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. When he decided to migrate, he put on his sword, put his bow over his shoulder, picked up his arrows and carried his stick by his side. He went out to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, where the non-Muslims were sitting and circumambulated the Kaaba and prayed behind the Station of Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Then he went to each of the gatherings of the non-Muslims and told them he was migrating and whoever desired to make their mother bereft of himself, his child an orphan and his wife a widow, should meet him behind a valley. No one dared to challenge him to a fight. Instead, a few weak and oppressed people followed him and he taught them about Islam and then left Mecca and headed for Medina, with a handful of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 60.

It is important for Muslims to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not demand Muslims to overcome the difficulties which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may

Allah be pleased with them, endured. For example, they migrated from Mecca to Medina whereby they left behind their families, homes, businesses and migrated to a strange land all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

In comparison, the difficulties Muslims face now are not as difficult as those the righteous predecessors faced. Muslims should therefore be grateful that they are only required to make a few small sacrifices, such as sacrificing some sleep to offer the obligatory dawn prayer and some wealth to donate the obligatory charity. Allah, the Exalted, is not commanding them to leave their homes and families for His sake. This gratitude must be shown practically by using the blessings one possesses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, when a Muslim faces difficulties they should remember the difficulties the righteous predecessors faced and how they overcame them through steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This knowledge can provide a Muslim the strength to overcome their difficulties as they know the righteous predecessors were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, yet they endured more severe difficulties with patience. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, advises that the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, endured the most difficult of tests and they are undoubtedly the most beloved to Allah, the Exalted.

If a Muslim follows the steadfast attitude of the righteous predecessors it is hoped they will end up with them in the hereafter.

Life in Medina During the Lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The 1st Year After Migration

Construction of Masjid Nabawi in Medina

A Beautiful Legacy

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina, one of the first things he did was build a house of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid An Nabawi. The land belonged to two orphaned boys, Suhayl and Sahl, may Allah be pleased with them, who offered the land for free but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused to take it for free and purchased it from them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 165-166.

First of all, it is important to understand worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to

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

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themself as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themself what is their legacy?

The Call to Prayer

Call to Success

After the construction of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the people needed to be alerted to when the congregational prayers at the Mosque were about to begin. Some suggestions were made, such as using a horn or a bell, but these were rejected by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he did not desire to imitate the people of the book. Someone suggested that a person should call out when the congregational prayer was about to commence. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, favored this option. Abdullah Bin Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, saw a dream where a person dictated to him what the call of prayer should consist of. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, also experienced a similar dream. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded Bilal Bin Rabah, may Allah be pleased with him, to make the call for the congregrational prayer. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 731-733.

The first thing to note is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose a Ethiopian former slave to give the call to prayer, someone who was often looked down by the wider society of Arabia because of his ethnicity and social status. This indicates the importance of equality in Islam.

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, this incident also indicates the importance of attending the Mosques for the sake of education and offering the obligatory prayers with the congregation.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“…and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Sincerity to Others

After migrating to Medina, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed that two non-Muslims from Mecca, Abu Jahl Ibn Hisham and Al Harith Ibn Hisham, visited Medina in order to convince their Muslim half-brother, Ayyash Ibn Abi Rabee'ah, may Allah be pleased to him, to return to Mecca with them. They promised him they did not desire to harm him and only wanted him to return to Mecca to visit their mother, who had sworn not to look after herself until she saw him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was perceptive and understood the two non-Muslims were plotting a scheme against Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told him not to go with them. Out of love for his mother, Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, desired to go to Mecca and commented that he would also bring some of his wealth back from Mecca to Medina, after seeing his mother. In order to discourage him, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, offered him half his wealth. But Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, still refused to stay in Medina. Finally, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gave him his own fast camel and warned him to immediately flee from the non-Muslims of Mecca if he suspected them of treachery. On the way back to Mecca, Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, was betrayed and kidnapped. They tortured him until he gave up Islam and returned to his former religion.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that Allah, the Exalted, would never accept the repentance of a person who apostatized. Later on, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the following verses were revealed about those who apostatized. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verses 53-55:

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped. And follow the best of what was revealed to you from your Lord [i.e., the Qur'ān] before the punishment comes upon you suddenly while you do not perceive.""

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then wrote these verses down and sent them to those who were tortured and forced to apostatize. They sincerely repented and eventually managed to migrate to Medina to join their Muslim brothers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 61-64.

In every step, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, showed complete sincerity to his Muslim brothers. He first warned Ayyash, may Allah be pleased with him, not to go with the two non-Muslims back to Mecca and even offered half his wealth to keep him in Medina. He even gave him his own camel to travel on. Finally, he sent these verses of the Holy Quran to them in order to encourage them to sincerely repent and re-enter the fold of Islam. This sincerity to others is a key aspect of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

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

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Brotherhood

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, established brotherhood between his fellow Emigrants, the Muhajireen, and the Helpers, the Ansars, may Allah be pleased with them all. He advised them to become brothers in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 215.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, established a bond of brotherhood between Umar Ibn Khattab and three other Companions: Uwaym Ibn Sa'idah, Utban Ibn Malik and Mu'adh Ibn Afra, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 66.

With the passing of time people 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…"

Sensible Questions

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was not shy of expressing his opinion and asking the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questions when he was unsure about matters. But he always observed the right manners when doing so and asked sensible questions and expressed sensible opinions, which were rooted in Islamic knowledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 75.

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

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

him, correctly meaning, fulfilling them with their full etiquettes and conditions.

A Muslim should instead research and query about topics which are relevant and important to understand for both worldly and religious matters otherwise they will follow in the footsteps of the people mentioned in this Hadith and only make their own lives more difficult.

Deep Understanding

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

In a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 402, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that three of his opinions were confirmed through divine revelation. The first was his desire to take the Station of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, at Mecca, as a place of offering prayer. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 125:

"…And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer…"

The second was his advice to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, desired the

wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with them, to veil themselves from men, as both good and bad men would visit the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and would therefore inevitability, interact with his wives. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verse 31:

“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof[3] and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment [i.e., beauty] except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess [i.e., slaves], or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.”

And chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 59:

“O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments…”

The third time is when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was facing some stress from his wives. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, warned them that perhaps he would divorce them all and Allah, the Exalted, would give him wives better than them. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 5:

“Perhaps his Lord, if he divorced you [all], would substitute for him wives better than you - submitting [to Allāh], believing, devoutly obedient, repentant, worshipping, and traveling - [ones] previously married and virgins.”

Muslims must strive to emulate the zeal of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge in order to obtain a deep understanding of Islam.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about

knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

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

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

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

Just Punishment

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, consulted his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do with their prisoners of war. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised to execute them for their many crimes and acts of war. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked this suggestion. Then, Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested to pardon them from execution and instead allow them to purchase their own freedom. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with this advice and acted on it. The next day, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, weeping. When he questioned their behaviour, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that Allah, the Exalted, had shown him the punishment that would have

afflicted them for taking ransom for the prisoners instead of executing them. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 8 Al Anfal, verses 67-68:

“It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] until he inflicts a massacre [upon Allāh's enemies] in the land. You [i.e., some Muslims] desire the commodities of this world, but Allāh desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise. If not for a decree from Allāh that preceded, you would have been touched for what you took by a great punishment.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 305 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4588.

Executing the prisoners was a just punishment for their crimes and would have acted as a strong deterrent against the violent behaviour of the non-Muslims of Mecca. This deterrent, in the long run, might have prevented further battles thereby saving lives.

Generally speaking, it is important to learn that no matter how much physical or social strength a person has a day will certainly come when they face the consequences of their actions. In most cases, this occurs during their life where the actions of a person leads them to trouble, such as prison and eventually they will face the consequences of their actions in the hereafter as well. This applies to all people not just leaders.

A Muslim should therefore never mistreat others, such as their relatives. They should learn a lesson from the tyrannical leaders of history who were greater in strength than them yet, a day certainly came when their strength did not benefit them and they faced the consequences of their evil deeds. Social influence and strength are fickle things as they quickly pass from person to person thereby, never remaining with anyone for long. Therefore, a Muslim who possesses such strength should use it in a way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, by benefiting themself and others. But if they abuse their authority then they will eventually face a punishment which no one can protect them from.

In addition, it is important not to abuse one's authority as it may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgment Day. Every oppressor will have to give their righteous deeds to their victims and if necessary take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This will cause many oppressors to be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

To conclude, a Muslim should never forget to hold themself accountable for their deeds. Those who do will avoid disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others. But those who do not judge themselves will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and harming others heedlessly not knowing that in actual fact they are only harming themselves. But when they realize this fact it will be too late for them to escape punishment.

Perfecting Faith

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, regularly visited him during his final illness in the hope he would sincerely repent and become a true Muslim. He however did not repent and died a hypocrite. His son Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with him, requested the shirt of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so he could wrap his father's body with it. In addition, he requested him to lead the funeral prayer for his father. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave his shirt and rose to lead the funeral prayer. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, took hold of his gown and urged him not to lead the funeral prayer of the man who stopped at nothing in trying to destroy Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, even reminded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the verse which clearly

states that even if he sought forgiveness for the hypocrites seventy times Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive them. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 80:

“Ask forgiveness for them, [O Muḥammad], or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times - never will Allah forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would seek forgiveness for him more than seventy times. He then led his funeral prayer. Allah, the Exalted, then forbade him from doing this in the future. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 84:

“And do not pray [the funeral prayer], over any of them who has died - ever - or stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were defiantly disobedient.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 46-47 and in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3097.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, behaved in such a manner out of love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and due to his perfect faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visiting Others

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

Once the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent a slave to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. The slave entered his house without permission while Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was sleeping and part of his body was uncovered. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, expressed his desire to receive commands and prohibitions from Allah, the Exalted, regarding visiting each other. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verse 58:

"O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not [yet] reached puberty among you ask permission of you [before entering] at three times: before the dawn prayer and when you put aside your clothing [for rest] at noon and after the night prayer. [These are] three times of privacy for you…"

Generally speaking, it is important for a Muslim to fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting others according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain their reward. They should not stay long thereby causing trouble to the host and their relatives. In this day and age it is easy to contact the host and their family beforehand in order to ensure they visit them at the appropriate time. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. 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.”

Key to All Evil

As Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to gain and act on Islamic knowledge, he was granted a deep understanding of Islam, an understanding matched only by a few. He reached such a level that his opinions and statements were often confirmed through divine revelation. It is why Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed that there was an Angel who spoke with the tongue of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 64.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once supplicated for Allah, the Exalted, to make His verdict concerning alcohol clear to everyone. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."…"

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, repeated his supplication and then Allah, the Exalted, eventually revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 43:

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying…”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, again repeated his supplication and then Allah, the Exalted, eventually revealed chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verses 90-91:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allāh], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid[1] it that you may be successful. Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. So will you not desist?”

After hearing this Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that they would abstain. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3049.

Abrogation is the process by which one command or prohibition after some time is replaced by another command or prohibition.

Allah, the Exalted, employed this technique in order to make the transition from a non-Muslim to a strong Muslim easier for a person. If all the final commands and prohibitions were put into full affect in one go this process becomes difficult. This is the reason why alcohol was not forbidden immediately in Islam, as giving it up in one instant would have been difficult for most people who drank it. Instead it was prohibited in stages, through the verses quoted earlier.

This process is also adopted by medical doctors who do not prescribe the full doses of medicines straight way and instead build up the dose over time so that they patients adapt to them in a positive way. This strategy was in fact a great blessing and mercy from Allah, the Exalted, as countless people who accepted Islam would have rejected it if all the final commands and prohibitions were revealed in one go at the beginning of revelation. As indicated by the final part of this verse even though Allah, the Exalted, undoubtedly has the authority to do this yet He chose the path of ease and mercy for the people.

In addition, the prohibitions and commands of Allah, the Exalted, do not exist to make people's life harder. They only exist in order to benefit people in both this world and in the next even if these benefits are not apparent to people. For example, the negative effects of alcohol, which science has proven, was not always apparent such as its negative effect on the organs of the body. It only became unlawful in Islam to protect people from this and other harms. In addition, It is an aspect of faith to accept something without understanding its wisdoms. If all the wisdoms of the commands and prohibitions were made apparent then it would not allow Muslims to possess complete faith. Allah, the Exalted, does not benefit from these commands and prohibitions only people do.

This process of abrogation is in fact an aspect of the protection and help of Allah, the Exalted, so that one can succeed in both worlds with ease.

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

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

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

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

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

Spreading the Islamic greeting of peace is a key to obtaining Paradise according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 68. Yet, a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 1017, advises Muslims not to greet someone who regularly drinks alcohol.

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

Adhering to True Guidance

When questioned about the Holy Quran, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, avoided giving his own opinions and instead adhered to the guidance given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once he was questioned about some verses of the Holy Quran. He commented on them but added that he heard the interpretations from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, otherwise he would not have commented on them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 84.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If Muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered a righteous deed it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. Because the fact is that the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources even if it is a righteous deed the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many Muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in

these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins they have preoccupied Muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a Muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Striving for Knowledge

While living in Medina, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured his other responsibilities would not hinder him from seeking knowledge from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He and his neighbour had an arrangement whereby one of them would go to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to gain knowledge on one day and teach it to other. And on the next day the other one would go to seek knowledge and then teach it to the former. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 87-88.

The deep level of knowledge Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed is further highlighted in a dream the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had. One should bear in mind, the dreams of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, are a form of divine revelation. In his dream, milk was brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He drank it until he could see its wetness emerging from his fingertips. He then gave the leftovers to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. When interpreting this dream, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that the milk referred to knowledge. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3681.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that learning one

verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer. And learning a topic of Islamic knowledge even if one does not act on it is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

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

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

A True Believer

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once told the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that he was more dearer to him then everyone else except himself. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that he would not be a true believer until he was more dearer to him than even his own self. Then Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, responded by declaring that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had become more dearer to him than himself. Finally, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that he was now a true believer. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6632.

The first thing to note, is the honesty of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him.

Secondly, true belief involves sincerity. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity

also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Detachment from the World

Once, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, observed the extreme poverty the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was living in and as a result he wept. When questioned about his weeping, he replied that while the worldly kings were enjoying the luxuries of the world, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was living in extreme poverty. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then asked him whether he was satisfied that the worldly kings enjoyed the material world, while they received the pleasures of the hereafter. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3691.

Throughout his life, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, emulated the simple lifestyle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even during his Caliphate, when the world was placed at his feet.

It is important to note, the material world which one should detach from actually refers to one's desires. It does not refer to the physical world, such as the mountains. This is indicated by chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 14:

"Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle

and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return [i.e., Paradise].”

These things are connected to the desires of people and by them one becomes distracted from preparing for the hereafter. When one abstains from their desires they are in fact detaching from the material world. This is why a Muslim who does not possess worldly things can still be regarded a worldly person because of their inner desire and love for it. Whereas, a Muslim who possesses worldly things, like some of the righteous predecessors, can be considered detached from the material world as they do not desire and occupy their minds, hearts and actions with them. Instead they desire lies in the eternal hereafter.

The first level of abstinence is turning away from unlawful and vain desires which are not connected to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This person busies themself in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities all the while focusing on the hereafter. They turn away from things and people who prevent them from fulfilling this important deed.

The next stage of abstinence is when one takes only the things they need from the material world in order to fulfil their necessities and responsibilities. They do not occupy their time on things which will not derive them benefit in the next world. This is the advice given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. He advised a Muslim to live in this material world as a stranger or a traveller. Both types of people will only take what they need from the material world in order to reach their destination

meaning, the hereafter safely. A Muslim can achieve this by understanding how close their death and departure to the hereafter is. Not only can death pounce on a person at any time but even if one lives a long life it seems as though it passed in a moment. By realising this reality one sacrifices the moment for the sake of the eternal hereafter. Shortening one's hope for a long life in this material world will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over all else. The one who hopes for a long life will be inspired to behave in the opposite manner.

The one who is truly abstinent in the material world neither blames it nor praises it. They do not rejoice when they gain it nor do they grieve when it passes them by. The mind of this pious Muslim is too focused on the eternal hereafter to greedily notice the small material world.

Abstinence consists of several different levels. Some Muslims abstain in order to free their hearts of every vain and useless occupation so that they can fully concentrate on obeying Allah, the Exalted, and fulfil their responsibilities towards people. According to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 257, the one who behaves in such a manner will find that Allah, the Exalted, will suffice them by taking care of their worldly issues. But the one who is only concerned with worldly things will be left to their devices and will find nothing but destruction. This is why it is been said that the one who pursues the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, will find that the minimal effect it has on them is that it distracts them from the remembrance and obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is still true even if a person commits no sins in their pursuit of the excess aspects of the material world.

Some abstain from the world in order to lighten their accountability on the Day of Judgement. The more one possesses the more they will be held accountable. In fact, whoever has their deeds scrutinised by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day will be punished. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6536. The lighter one's accountability the less likely this will occur. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6444, that those who possess plenty in the world will possess very little good on the Day of Rising except for those who dedicated their belongings and wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, but these are a few in number. This long accountability is the reason why each person, rich or poor, will wish on the Day of Judgement that they were only given their daily provision during their lives on Earth. This has been confirmed in Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4140.

Some Muslims abstain from the excess of this material world out of desire for Paradise which will make up for losing out on the pleasures of this material world.

Some abstain from the excess of the material world out of fear of Hell. They rightfully believe that the more one indulges in the excess of this material world the closer they are to the unlawful, which leads to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. In fact, it is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4215, that a Muslim will not become pious until they abstain from something which is not a sin out of fear it may lead to a sin.

The highest degree of abstinence is to understand and act on what Allah, the Exalted, desires from His servants which has been mentioned throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Namely, to abstain from the excess of the material world out of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, knowing that their Lord does not like the material world. Allah, the Exalted, has condemned the excess of this material world and has belittled its worth. These pious servants were embarrassed that their Lord should see them inclining towards something which He dislikes. These are the greatest servants as they only act according to the wishes of their Lord even when they are given an opportunity to enjoy the lawful luxuries of this world. This is the very reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose poverty even though he was offered the treasuries of the Earth. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6590. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose this as he knew it was what Allah, the Exalted, desired for His servants. As Allah, the Exalted, disliked the material world the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, rejected it out of love for His Lord. How can a true servant love and indulge in what their Lord dislikes?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did set an example for the poor by choosing poverty and taught the rich how to live through his words and actions. He could have easily chosen the alternative and practically showed the rich how to live by taking the treasuries of the world which were offered to him and he could have taught the poor how to live correctly through his words and actions. But he chose poverty for a specific reason which was out of servanthood to his Lord, Allah, the Exalted. This abstinence was adopted by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, the first rightly guided Caliph of Islam Abu

Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, once cried when water sweetened with honey was given to him. He explained that he once observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pushing away an invisible object. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told him the material world had come to him and he commanded it to leave him alone. The material world replied that he had escaped the material world but those after him would not. Because of this Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, wept when seeing the water sweetened with honey believing the material world had come to misguide him. This incident is recorded in Imam Ashfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 47.

In reality, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, never ate or dressed to gain pleasure but only took what they needed from the material world while focusing on preparing for the hereafter. They disliked when the material world was placed at their feet being fearful that perhaps their reward had been given to them in this world instead of in the hereafter.

Anyone who is truly abstinent will follow in their footsteps. Muslims should not fool themselves by indulging in the unnecessary luxuries of this material world while claiming their heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted. If a person's heart is purified it manifests on their limbs and in their actions which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094. Whoever's heart is attached to Allah, the Exalted, follows in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by taking what they need from the material world, spending only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and turning away from the excess of the material world while striving to prepare for the hereafter. This is true abstinence.

Caring for Others

Talha Ibn Ubaydullah once observed Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, leaving his house secretly at night. He then followed him and observed that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, entered a house and shortly after left it. Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, visited the house the next day and found that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had been secretly aiding a poor and old blind woman with her daily chores. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 71.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of aiding the needy.

This includes all types of aiding others not just financial aid. Any type of lawful need of others should be fulfilled according to one's strength and if a Muslim finds they cannot provide this aid then they should direct the needy person to someone who can help them. This will ensure they gain the same reward as the one who aids the needy person. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2671. Muslims must sincerely aid others in ways which benefit them solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, without desiring any payback from people as this only leads to their reward being cancelled. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

Simply put, if a Muslim desires the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in their moment of need then they must strive to aid others when they are in need. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. But those who turn away from helping others may well be left stranded in their time of need.

If Muslims desire to demonstrate true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they receive an increase in blessings then they must use the blessings they already possess correctly as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

An aspect of this is helping the needy with whatever one possesses such as good advice.

One should understand a vital point which will prevent them from becoming proud. Namely, the help they offer the needy is not innately theirs. It was

created and therefore belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and they must therefore use it according to the wishes of the true owner by helping the needy. In reality, the needy are doing their helper a favor as they will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. If there was no one in need people would lose out on this method of gaining much reward.

Prioritising Correctly

Once, during a Friday sermon, some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, left the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was preaching, in order to tend to a trade caravan which arrived in Medina. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was amongst those who remained with him. Then chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 11, was revealed:

"But [on one occasion] when they saw a transaction or a diversion they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, "What is with Allāh is better than diversion and than a transaction, and Allāh is the best of providers.""

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2000.

Even though this was not a sin none the less, it contradicted the correct manners one must show the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 62:

"The believers are only those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger and, when they are [meeting] with him for a matter of common interest, do not

depart until they have asked his permission. Indeed, those who ask your [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] permission, - those are the ones who believe in Allāh and His Messenger. So when they ask your permission due to something of their affairs, then give permission to whom you will among them…"

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that remaining with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would lead to an increase in useful knowledge. This is better than trade and diversion. This does not mean one should abandon their lawful livelihood rather, they should strike a balance between the two while leaning towards gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Behaving in this manner leads to peace and success in both worlds.

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

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

rich person even if they possess little wealth as they become independent of things. Independence of anything makes one rich in respect to it.

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

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

Leading by Example

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that he did not know how long he would continue to live amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Then he commanded them to follow the two who came after him and then pointed towards Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 97.

They were both suited for leadership as they both led by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah,

the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themself and prohibited evil yet acted on it themself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themself then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

Strong Faith

It is important to note, that the dream of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is a type of divine revelation. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once had a dream, where he observed a group of people wearing garments of different lengths. Some of them were wearing garments which reached their chests and others lower than that. Then he observed Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who was wearing such a long garment that it was dragging behind him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, interpreted the dream and indicated that the garments represented one's faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6189.

This dream indicated the certainty of faith Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed.

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

As confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, gaining useful knowledge is a duty on all Muslims. One of the reasons for this is that it is the best way a Muslim can strengthen their faith in Islam. This is important to pursue as the stronger one's certainty of faith the greater the chance they will remain steadfast on the correct path, especially when facing difficulties. In addition, having certainty of faith has been described as one of the best things one can possess in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3849. This knowledge should be obtained by studying the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through a reliable source.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are full of such examples. Therefore, one should strive to learn and act on these divine teachings so that they adopt certainty of faith. The one who achieves this will not be shaken by any difficulty they face and will remain steadfast on the path which leads to the gates of Paradise. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

Key to Paradise

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once told Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, to give the glad tidings of Paradise to anyone who bears witness, with certainty in their heart, that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, the Exalted. When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, heard this he advised the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to spread this as people might become lazy and rely on their verbal declaration of faith instead of striving hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed with his opinion. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 147.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that the Hadith actually makes it clear that one cannot believe in Islam with certainty of faith without learning and acting on Islamic teachings but he was concerned people would misinterpret the Hadith to mean that one can simply claim faith in Islam without sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which advise mankind that whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted, will be saved from the fire of Hell. One such example is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128.

The meaning of these Hadiths is that whoever dies while believing in this testimony will either enter Paradise and escape Hell or they will enter Hell to the extent of their sins and then eventually be allowed into Paradise where they will dwell forever. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7510.

It is important to note, that those who desire to enter Paradise without entering Hell first must not only declare their belief in Islam verbally but they must also fulfil its conditions and obligations. The testimony of faith is undoubtedly the key to Paradise but a key needs teeth in order to unlock a specific door. The teeth of the key to Paradise are its obligations and duties. Without them meaning, the key without its teeth, will not open the door to Paradise. This is proven through many Hadiths which indicate entry into Paradise requires one to fulfil the conditions and duties of Islam. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1397, indicates that the testimony must be supported by actions in the form of the pillars of Islam, such as establishing the obligatory prayers.

The first part of the testimony namely, there is none worthy of worship save Allah, the Exalted, means that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who must be obeyed and never disobeyed. When one accepts Allah, the Exalted, as their God they must not obey anything which leads to His disobedience as Allah, the Exalted, alone is their Master and they are only His slaves. But the moment one obeys anything which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have corrupted their belief in His Oneness which has been indicated in chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…”

The Holy Quran has warned Muslims that whoever commits sins is in reality worshipping the Devil as they have obeyed him over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 36 Yaseen, verse 60:

“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

The Muslims who reject their desires, the desires of others and the commands of the Devil and instead only obey Allah, the Exalted, have truly taken Allah, the Exalted, as their God. These Muslims have been granted the protection of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. These Muslims have practically actualised the testimony of Islam as they supported their verbal and internal claim with sincere actions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one acts according to his traditions they have fulfilled the second aspect of the testimony namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the servant and final messenger of Allah, the Exalted. These Muslims are the ones referred to in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 128. It advises they will be saved from the Hellfire by Allah, the Exalted.

The person who declares Islam with the tongue and internally accepts it is undoubtedly a Muslim but their true sincere belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, is diminished according to their sins.

An aspect of truly acting on the testimony is sincerely loving Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has indicated this in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. It advises that this is an aspect of perfecting one's faith. This is when one loves what Allah, the Exalted, loves and hates what He hates. As this was the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2333, Muslims have been commanded to follow him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

It is clear from Islamic teachings that loving what Allah, the Exalted, hates and disliking what Allah, the Exalted, loves is a clear indication of a person following their own desires and obeying them over Allah, the Exalted. This attitude reduces one's belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. The following verse makes it clear that adopting this mentality is a deviation from true belief in the testimony of Islam. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

“Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.""”

The one who worships Allah, the Exalted, according to their own desires worships Him on the edge. Meaning, when they face times of ease they become pleased but when they encounter difficulties they turn away from His obedience in anger. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, informs Muslims how to correctly believe and act on the testimony of faith, which prevents one being harmed by the fire of Hell in the next world. This is to first complete the obligatory duties correctly while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes. Then one must add to this by performing voluntary righteous deeds, the best of which are the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and causes Allah, the Exalted, to empower every organ

of their body so that they only obey Him. This true and sincere obedience is the fulfilment of the testimony of faith. This is the sound heart which contains only the love of Allah, the Exalted, and is free of worldly desires and the love of the material world. 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."

It is important to note, this does not mean a Muslim becomes free from committing sins but it means they sincerely repent from them whenever they are rarely committed.

To conclude, it is vital for Muslims to not only declare the testimony of Islam internally and verbally but they must also show it in their actions as this is the only way to achieve true success in this world and completely escape punishment in the next world also.

Reducing Evil Influences

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

Loving for Allah (SWT)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was once asked who the most beloved person to him was, to which he named his wife, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. Then he was asked which of the men was the most beloved to him and he named her father, Abu Bakkar, and after him, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3662.

Unlike most people nowadays, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing be upon him, loved Abu Bakkar and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, because of their sincerity and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, his love was for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of worldly reasons.

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. 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.

To conclude, this noble quality includes loving for others what one loves for themself 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.

Embodying Truthfulness

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that Allah, the Exalted, had put the truth on the tongue and in the heart of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3682.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim

discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Avoiding Greed

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once gave Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, some wealth as a gift. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, requested him to instead give it to someone who was poorer than him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to take it and added that if someone gave him something he did not ask for nor hoped for he should take it. And anything which does not come to him, he should not seek it. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2405.

This incident encourages one to avoid greed.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2511, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned Muslims against greed. This can lead one to withholding the obligatory charity which only leads to destruction in both worlds. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them.

Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…"

If one's greed prevents them from donating voluntary charity it may not be unlawful but it is highly undesirable as this contradicts the characteristic of a true believer. Put simply, the stingy person is far from Allah, the Exalted, far from Paradise, far from people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961.

The 2nd Year After Migration

The Battle of Badr

Standing Firm

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. On the way to raiding a caravan of the non-Muslims of Mecca the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca had organized an army to confront the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, for their opinion on what to do. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 259-260.

At this time, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, rose up and comforted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by pledging his support to him under all circumstances and encouraged the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to do the same. Then Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, rose up and did the same thing: he pledged his support to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and encouraged the others

to do the same. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 93-94.

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

"And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…"

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself 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.

In addition, an aspect of hypocrisy is when one verbally shows support for others and their good projects such as, building a mosque but when the time comes to take part in the project such as, donating wealth they seem to disappear. Similarly, when people are facing good times they verbally support them reminding others of their loyalty to them. But the moment the people face difficulties these hypocrites offer no emotional or physical support. Instead they criticize them. This was the attitude of the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 62:

“So how [will it be] when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth and then they come to you swearing by Allah, "We intended nothing but good conduct and accommodation."”

Uncompromising in Faith

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After the battle was over and the non-Muslims were defeated the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered the bodies of the non-Muslims to be placed in an old well. After this was done he called out to them enumerating those in the well and asked if they had found what Allah, the Exalted, promised them as he was given exactly what Allah, the Exalted, promised him. When he was questioned about calling out to the dead he replied that they could hear his words but they could not reply. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 300.

In this battle, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, confronted and killed his maternal uncle, Al Aas Ibn Hashim. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 93-94.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not allow any relationship to overcome his sincerity and loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must adopt this uncompromising attitude, if they desire success in both worlds.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

True Love

In the second year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the first battle of Islam, the Battle of Badr, took place. After victory was given to the Muslims some prisoners of war were taken including the uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Al Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, who later became Muslim. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged Al Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, to accept Islam and commented that him accepting Islam would please him more than if his own father accepted Islam, as this would greatly please the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 307-308.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is that one will prefer the commands and prohibitions delivered in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over their own desires and opinions. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 24:

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

Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.""

A person only inclines towards the things mentioned in this verse out of love for them. But when one chooses the obedience to Islam over these things it proves their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A true lover only desires to obey their beloved and keep them pleased at all times. This is only possible when a Muslim obeys the teachings of Islam.

The 3rd Year After Migration

The Battle of Uhud

Facing Difficulties and Hardship

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, safely retreated to Mount Uhud, Abu Sufyan, the non-Muslim leader, called out to them enquiring if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakr Siddique and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, had been killed or not. Abu Sufyan understood that the continuation of Islam was hinged on these great personalities.

Initially, no one replied to him as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told them to remain silent. But when Abu Sufyan began to boast about what occurred, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could not remain silent and rebuked him. Abu Sufyan then told them that his soldiers had mutilated the bodies of the fallen Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though he did not order them to do so, but their actions did not displease him. Abu Sufyan boasted how this battle was revenge for the Battle of Badr, but Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he was mistaken as the non-Muslims who were killed were in Hell whereas the fallen Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were in Paradise. Before leaving, Abu Sufyan challenged the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to meet the following year at Badr to fight again, which the latter accepted. After the non-Muslim army left, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was dispatched to gather intelligence and assess whether the non-Muslim army was heading home to Mecca or heading to attack Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if they headed for Medina, he would march there and fight them. But after Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, assessed the situation he realized they were heading home to Mecca. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 281-282.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they face difficulties then when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In

fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

Obedience in Difficulties

In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina, they became aware that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were considering marching back towards Medina in order to wipe out Islam for good. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave orders for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, despite their grievous wounds and tired bodies, to move out in pursuit of the non-Muslims. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, responded positively Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 172:

“Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 67-68.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted,

according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

To conclude, it is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

A Suitable Spouse

When the daughter of Umar Ibn Khattab, Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with them, became a widow, he discussed a possible marriage proposal with Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. The latter respectively declined the offer as he was not in the right position to get married. Umar then discussed a marriage proposal with Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, who did not give an immediate response. Later on, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, proposed and married Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with her. Abu Bakkar then explained to Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, that he did not initially reply as he was aware that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a desire to marry her. Instead of divulging this information he decided not to reply immediately. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3261.

Umar, may Allah be pleased be him, took steps to ensure his daughter married a suitable Muslim who would strive to fulfill her rights. Muslims must follow in his footsteps when searching for a spouse for themselves or those under their care. A suitable spouse is only obtained when one follows the guidance of Islam.

For example, 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. 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.

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. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

The 4th Year After Migration

The Banu Nadir

Forgoing Revenge

In the fourth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, visited a non-Muslim tribe, Banu Nadir, who he had previously made a pledge of support and peace with, in order to ask for financial assistance. They replied that they would help him while secretly planning to assassinate him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received divine revelation informing them of their treachery and he left and returned to Medina before they had a chance to enact their evil plan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then dispatched a message to the Banu Nadir warning them to leave his territory and protection. The hypocrites urged the Banu Nadir to stay and offered their support to them. They claimed that if the Banu Nadir resisted against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would support them, if the Banu Nadir fought, they would fight with them and if they were expelled from the territory, they would leave with them. This encouraged the Banu Nadir to stand against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ultimately the hypocrites did nothing when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, decided to fight against the Banu Nadir. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, besieged the Banu Nadir,

the latter requested the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to spare their blood and instead grant them safe passage so they could evacuate the area with their belongings. Instead of taking revenge against the Banu Nadir for their evil plan, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed them to take whatever they could carry except weapons. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 100-101.

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.

Finally, 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 and peace of mind in both worlds.

The Second Badr

Before leaving the Battle of Uhud, the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan, announced an appointment for the two armies to meet again at Badr the following year. When the time came the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, marched with around 1500 soldiers and camped at Badr, waiting for the non-Muslims. The non-Muslim army consisted of around 2000 soldiers but set up camp away from Badr. Allah, the Exalted, cast terror into their hearts and even though he set the appointment himself, Abu Sufyan, encouraged the soldiers to head back to Mecca. As they were frightened to engage the Muslims, they did not show any opposition to him and returned to Mecca. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained in Badr and engaged in some profitable trade. After eight days, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, left Badr with awe and superiority which had spread into the hearts of the Arab people. This has been discussed in Imam Safi Ur Rahman's, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 306-307.

Because of their firmness, Allah, the Exalted, granted the Muslims a psychological victory which echoed across Arabia more than a military victory would have.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should not turn their back on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted,

whenever they are tempted by these enemies. They should instead remain steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is achieved by avoiding the places, things and people who invite and tempt them towards sins and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Avoiding the traps of the Devil is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. The same way traps on a path are only avoided by possessing knowledge of them similarly; Islamic knowledge is required to avoid the traps of the Devil. For example, a Muslim might spend much time reciting the Holy Quran but because of their ignorance they might destroy their righteous deeds without realising it through sins such as, backbiting. A Muslim is bound to face these attacks so they should therefore prepare for them through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and in return gain an uncountable reward. Allah, the Exalted, has guaranteed right guidance for those who struggle in this way for His sake. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself 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.

The 5th Year After Migration

The Battle of Ahzab

An Exit

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq/Ahzab. When word of their attack reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at the advice of Salman Al Farsi, may Allah be pleased with him, he commanded for a huge trench to be dug in the only side of Medina the enemy army could attack from. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, actively participated in digging this trench. He encouraged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with him, to actively take part and seek the reward of the hereafter. They all worked alongside him. When the enemy forces reached near Medina and the trench they setup camp. A non-Muslim tribe within Medina, the Banu Qurayza, who had a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, locked their fortresses up. A non-Muslim travelled from the non-Muslim army and urged one of the leaders of Banu Qurayza, Ka'b Bin Asad, to break his peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead join the non-Muslim army and attack the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from within Medina once the fighting began. Ka'b Bin Asad, then dissolved his peace

treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and tore up the document on which it was written. The anxiety and fear increased as the enemies were outside and inside Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, remained firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout this battle and eventually Allah, the Exalted, dispatched a fierce wind towards the non-Muslim army which completely uprooted their camp and caused them to sink into confusion and distress. The non-Muslims decided to return home as the weather was against them and they failed to successfully penetrate the trench and enter Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 154-155.

Before the non-Muslim army left, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Hudaifa Bin Yamman, may Allah be pleased with him, to gather intel from the enemy camp but warned him not to do anything which could attract attention to himself. When he reached the enemy camp he observed the non-Muslim leader, Abu Sufyan. Hudaifa, may Allah be pleased with him, loaded his bow and was about to fire at Abu Sufyan but withheld his hand when he remembered the orders he was given. He secretly attended one of the meetings of the non-Muslims and ascertained that they had decided to leave and head back to their homes as they were running out of supplies, the wind sent by Allah, the Exalted, was wreaking havoc on them and they could not penetrate the trench dug by the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1383-1384.

An important lesson to learn from this event is trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Even in situations which appear inescapable and disastrous, like this great event, a Muslim should always trust in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Muslims must understand that their knowledge is very limited and that they are extremely short sighted. Meaning, they cannot fully perceive the wisdoms behind the choices of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the knowledge and the divine perception of Allah, the Exalted, is unlimited. Therefore, a Muslim should trust in the choices of Allah, the Exalted, just like a blind person trusts the guidance of their physical guide. No matter what the attitude of a Muslim the choice of Allah, the Exalted, will occur so it is best to trust in His wisdom rather than showing impatience which only leads to further trouble.

In addition, it is important to remember the countless examples within one's life when a person desired something only to regret it after obtaining it. And when they disliked something from occurring only to change their mind later on. 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.”

As destiny is out of people's hands it is important for Muslims to concentrate on the thing which is in their control if they desire to be rescued from difficulties namely, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed that He will save a

Muslim from all difficulties in both worlds. All they have to do is remain obedient to Him. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

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

It is foolish to stress about the thing which is not in one's control meaning, destiny, and remain heedless to the thing which is in one’s control namely, obeying Allah, the Exalted.

The Banu Qurayza

Treason

In the fifth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the enemies of Islam from Medina encouraged the non-Muslims of Mecca and various other non-Muslim tribes to attack Medina. This led to the Battle of Khandaq. After Allah, the Exalted, defeated the non-Muslim army, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to fight against the Banu Qurayza for their act of treason, when they broke their pact of peace and support with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead aligned with the non-Muslim army during the Battle of Khandaq. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, besieged the Banu Qurayza and Allah, the Exalted, cast terror in their hearts. The Banu Qurayza agreed to submit to the decision of a Companion, Sa'd Bin Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, who they knew well, even before he became a Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then summoned Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him, for their judgement and he decided that the soldiers of Banu Qurayza would be executed and their assets seized. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then declared that he had given judgement according to the ruling of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 166.

It is important to bear in mind the capital punishment for treason is a very standard judgement, even in this day and age. In addition, their crime was not against a single person but an entire city full of people. If they were exiled instead they would have only waged war with Medina again.

Allah, the Exalted, takes revenge on those who oppress His weak servants as they do not possess the power to defend nor avenge themselves.

A Muslim who understands this divine name will not oppress the servants of Allah, the Exalted, especially those who appear defenceless as in reality their Protector and Avenger is Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will take revenge for His servants during their lives on Earth and especially on Judgement Day. He will establish justice by forcing the oppressor to hand over their righteous deeds to their victim and if necessary, the victim's sins will be shifted to their oppressor. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A Muslim must act on this divine name by taking revenge against their own inner Devil which inspires them towards evil by subjecting it to the strict obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. And a Muslim must seek revenge on all things which prevent them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by turning away from them.

The 6th Year After Migration

Two Tongues of Fire

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he dispatched an expedition. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were returning from this expedition, a group of them surrounded a well aiming to quench their thirst. As the area around the well was overcrowded, two of the Companions, one from Medina and the other from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, got into a small quarrel. The leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, took this opportunity to cause further disruption by claiming that the migrants of Mecca were only causing them problems. He began to criticize the other hypocrites for allowing the migrants of Mecca to move into Medina. A child, Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, overheard his evil words and reported them to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abdullah Bin Ubayy was summoned but took huge oaths that he never spoke those words. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took no further action. In this connection Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 7-8:

“They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allāh until they disband." And to Allāh belong the depositories of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say, "If we return to al-Madīnah, the more honored [for

power] will surely expel therefrom the more humble." And to Allāh belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know."

After these verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, comforted Zayd Bin Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him, by taking his ear and commenting that this was the one who devoted his ear to Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 213-215.

A sign of hypocrisy is being two-faced. This is the one who changes their behaviour in order to please different groups of people intending thereby to gain some worldly things. They speak with many different tongues showing their support to different people while harbouring dislike for them. They fail to be sincere towards people which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. If they fail to repent they will find themself in the hereafter with two tongues of fire. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

"When they meet the believers, they say: "We believe," but when they meet their evil companions (in privacy), they say: "Surely we are with you; we were merely jesting.""

Benefit Yourself

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, strived hard in order to create discord and problems for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Once his son, Abdullah Bin Abdullah Bin Ubayy, who was a loyal Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and offered to kill his hypocrite father for his evil acts of treason against the city of Medina and its leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he would instead forgive and treat his father, the leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah Bin Ubayy, kindly. After the people of Medina heard this they would often criticize Abdullah Bin Ubayy whenever he behaved in an evil way. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, heard of this, he commented to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who had suggested to execute Abdullah Bin Ubayy for treason, that if he gave the order to execute him before, some people would have stood up for him whereas now, if he gave the order for his execution, the people would not hesitate in carrying it out. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 215.

It is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themself and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

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

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

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

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

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them

until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor's good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim's sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

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

"And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself…"

Slander of Aisha (RA) – Wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Letting Things Go

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, went on an expedition against the Banu Al Mustaliq. His wife Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, accompanied him as well. During journeys women would sit inside a small compartment which would be placed and tied on a camel. When the army set up camp Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, left to relief herself and returned to the camp. On her return she noticed her necklace had gone missing. She then retracted her steps until she found it. When she once again returned to the camp she found they had departed without her. This occurred as the men in charge of placing and tying her compartment on a camel assumed she was already inside. She remained at the abandoned campsite until a Companion, Safwan Bin Al Mu'attal, may Allah be pleased him, passed by and saw her. He was tasked to lag behind the army and pick up any luggage which had unknowingly fallen from the travelling army. He recognized Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, as he had seen her before the veiling of women became a duty in Islam. He respectfully offered her his camel to ride on as he walked ahead swiftly. When they reached the army people witnessed Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, entering the campsite. The hypocrites took this opportunity to spread an evil slander about her and the people became greatly perturbed. After Allah, the Exalted, exonerated Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, of this slander her father, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased him, declared that he would no longer financially aid his relative who took part in spreading this slander. Allah, the

Exalted, then revealed chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22, encouraging him and all Muslims to forgive and overlook the mistakes of others:

“And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allah, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

After this Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, retracted his declaration and continued helping his relative. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3180.

All Muslims 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.

The Pact of Hudaibiya

Supporting the Truth

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to dispatch Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslims of Mecca in order to avoid confrontation and make his peaceful intention clear. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him to send Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, instead, as the non-Muslims were angry with him because of his very harsh attitude towards them since he became Muslim. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted his recommendation. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have accepted this important role as the ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which would have clearly indicated his superiority. But out of loyalty and sincerity to the truth, he recommended someone more suitable for the role.

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 Ibn 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 Ibn 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 Ibn 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.

The Pledge of Ridwan

Pledge of Servanthood

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, as his ambassador to the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in order to inform them of his peaceful intention. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered this message, he was detained by the non-Muslims of Mecca. News spread to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, had been martyred. He took a pledge from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they would not leave Mecca until they took revenge for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he not only entered Mecca unarmed but as an ambassador of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Ambassadors have always been treated with respect and harming them is a declaration of war. This is true even in

this day and age. During the pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed one of his hands into the other and commented that his hand represented the hand of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and his pledge of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed numerous verses, such as chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 10:

"Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you,- they are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh. The hand of Allāh is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised Allāh - He will give him a great reward."

And chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 18:

"Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest."

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 227-228 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4066.

It is important for humanity to fulfill the pledge they made with Allah, the Exalted, which has been mentioned in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172 of the Holy Quran:

"And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.""

All humans were brought forth so that they could take this pledge to Allah, the Exalted. The lesson to understand behind this incident is that all people accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord. Meaning, the One who created them, sustains them and the One who will judge their deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is important for all Muslims to fulfil this pledge through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse indicates that Allah, the Exalted, did not ask the creation if they were His servants instead, He asked them if He was their Lord. This is an indication that the will of Allah, the Exalted, should always come before the will and desire of a person. If a Muslim has a choice between pleasing

Allah, the Exalted, or someone else this pledge should remind them that the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, must come first.

This question is also an indication of the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He hinted the answer to the creation by wording it as He did. This shows Muslims that even though Allah, the Exalted, is the Lord who will judge their deeds yet, He is also infinitely merciful.

The effect of this covenant is deeply embedded in the hearts of all mankind. In fact, this is the nature which has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6755. From this one can understand that it is important for people not to search for the truth after making their minds up beforehand and then search for evidence which supports their predetermined belief. Only those who open their minds without making a predetermined decision will unlock this covenant which has been embedded deep in their hearts. In fact, having an open mind is important in all issues not just in matters of faith as it helps one to find the truth and the best path. This attitude strengthens society and always encourages peace between people. But the stubbornness of those who predetermine their choices will always create wedges between members of a society which can affect people on a national level. It is important for Muslims not to always believe they are correct in worldly matters otherwise they will adopt this stubborn attitude. This will prevent them from accepting the opinions of others which will lead to arguments, enmity and fractured relationships. Therefore, this attitude should be avoided at all costs.

Finally, the fact that this covenant is deeply embedded in a person’s heart indicates that it is a duty on Muslims to uncover it. This will lead one to certainty of faith which is much stronger than faith based on hearsay meaning, being told by one's family that they are a Muslim. Certainty of faith allows a Muslim to overcome all difficulties successfully in this world while fulfilling their religious and worldly duties. One only fails in tests and their duties because of weakness in their faith. Certainty of faith is only obtained by gaining and acting on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

Remaining Firm

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions. One of which was that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not perform the Visitation (Umra) that year and instead he would return the following year. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, like many of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not pleased with these conditions as they seemed outwardly to favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. So he spoke to Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, about this and he reminded him to remain firm on the obedience of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then discussed this matter with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the latter declared that he would not oppose the command of Allah, the Exalted, and He would never let his mission fail. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the same exact reply to Umar as Abu Bakkar,

may Allah be pleased with them, did. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 228-229.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, expressed his opinion, yet he did not behave stubbornly and instead submitted to the choice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of

Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim’s duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

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

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

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

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

A Clear Victory

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end because of the pact whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its coming. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

Years later, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that there was no greater victory in Islam than the Pact of Hudaibiya. Even though the people did not realize its benefits at the time, due to their short-sightedness, Allah, the Exalted, had planned a gradual victory for Islam. He added, that during the farewell Holy Pilgrimage he observed the devotion and obedience of Suhayl Bin Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, who eventually accepted Islam, even though during the Pact of Hudaibiya he stubbornly opposed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, then praised Allah, the Exalted, for his conversion to Islam and the great victory Allah, the Exalted, granted Islam.

This superiority and success was granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they remained sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

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

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themself which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

Evil Plots Fail

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. One of which was that if any person who accepted Islam from Mecca fled to Medina, he or she would be returned to Mecca. But if someone fled from Medina to Mecca, they would not be sent back to Medina. It was obvious the non-Muslims of Mecca only demanded this as they believed it would weaken the Muslim nation by breaking their unity. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina. A Companion, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped his imprisonment in Mecca and fled to Medina. The non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched two men to retrieve Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, from Medina. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, honored the agreement and handed him over to be returned to Mecca. On his way back to Mecca, Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, escaped and eventually fled to another secluded

area away from Medina and Mecca. After this occurred, whenever a Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, fled their imprisonment in Mecca, they joined up with Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him. They numbers grew till eventually they began raiding and looting the merchant caravans of the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca, as the pact of peace did not include them, only the citizens of Medina were included. This caused severe financial problems for the people of Mecca. They eventually send a message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pleading for him to call Abu Basir, may Allah be pleased with him, and his force to Medina so that the raids and looting would end. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed and these men migrated to Medina peacefully. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 240.

One should never plot to do an evil thing as it will always, one way or another, backfire on them. Even if these consequences are delayed to the next world they will face them eventually. For example, the brothers of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, desired to harm him as they desired the love, respect and affection of their father the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. But it is clear that their scheming only put them further away from their desire. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 18:

"And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting…"

The more one plots evil the more Allah, the Exalted, will put them further from their goal. Even if they outwardly achieve their desire Allah, the

Exalted, will cause the very thing they desired to become a curse for them in both worlds unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”

The 7th Year After Migration

The Battle of Khaybar

Your Legacy

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he was commanded to strive against a non-Muslim tribe who lived in Khaybar close to Medina. The command was given as they persistently broke the peace treaty they had with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by constantly plotting against him with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca. When reaching their forts he declared that the next day he was going to give his banner to someone who loved Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and that this man was also a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that this man would conquer Khaybar. The next day he called for Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, and entrusted him with the banner and Khaybar was then conquered. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 251.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, received some land from this conquest and asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on how best to utilize it. He advised him to set it up as a charitable endowment. The yield from the property was continuously donated to the poor. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2773.

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

Unfortunately, many Muslims are so concerned about their wealth and properties that they only end up leaving them behind which does not benefit them in the least. Each Muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for creating a legacy for themself as the moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly. Today is the day a Muslim should truly reflect on the legacy they will leave behind. If this legacy is good and beneficial they should praise Allah, the Exalted, for

granting them the strength to do so. But if it is something which will not benefit them then they should prepare something which will so that they not only send forward good to the hereafter but also leave good behind. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. So each Muslim should ask themself what is their legacy?

The Visitation (Umra)

Humility Without Weakness

In the seventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he headed to Mecca to perform the Visitation (Umra), as agreed with the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca in the previous year. Word reached him that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca were spreading news that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were under great difficulty and distress. The non-Muslims lined up close to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, to witness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then supplicated for the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, on those who demonstrated strength on that day. In order to show their strength, they partially jogged around the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, while circumambulating it. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 308.

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 adopts humility without a shortcoming meaning, weakness. The humble one submits, accepts and acts on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby

proving their servanthood to Him. They readily accept the truth when it is presented to them even if it contradicts their desires and irrespective of who delivers it to them. Meaning, they do not reject the truth believing they know best. They do not look down at others believing they are superior to them because of any worldly thing they possess or because of their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they understand that their final outcome or the final outcome of others is unknown to them. Meaning, they may die while Allah, the Exalted, is not pleased with them. This reality should prevent a person from the deadly sin of pride. An atom's worth of which is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Humility without weakness means that a Muslim always demonstrates kindness to others but is not afraid to defend themself if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

The 8th Year After Migration

The Conquest of Mecca

Sincerity to Islam First

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting another tribe who attacked a tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca became aware that this news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they dispatched one of their leaders to Medina, Abu Sufyan, in order to reaffirm and extend the pact as they became extremely worried about the consequences of their treachery. Abu Sufyan spoke to many of the senior Companions, including Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, urging them to intercede on his behalf to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He listed the different affiliations he had with them in order to win them over such as tribal and kinship affiliations but they all replied in the same way. They refused to compromise on their faith in order to please him and did not desire to convince the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to renew the pact or not to renew it. They instead left the decision to their leader trusting in his divinely guided choice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 381-382.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would support and withhold their support for others based on their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and not for any other reason.

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

One of these characteristics is giving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This refers to every blessing one can give to others, such as physical and emotional support not just wealth. When one gives they will do so according to the teachings of Islam meaning, in matters pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as giving sincere advice. In fact, this is an aspect of being sincere to others which has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4204. It includes giving and sharing these blessings with others without counting one's favors as this proves they gave in order to receive something from others. Chapter 76 Al Insan, verse 9:

“[Saying], "We feed you only for the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.”

The final characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This includes withholding the blessings one possesses, such as wealth, from others in matters which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted. This Muslim will not observe who is requesting something from them instead they only assess the reason behind the request. If the reason contradicts the teachings of Islam they will withhold the blessing and not take part in the activity. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

This includes withholding one's speech and actions in matters which are not pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as backbiting or manifesting one's anger. This Muslim will not speak and act according to their desires and only precede in a situation when it pleases Allah, the Exalted, otherwise, they will withhold and refrain from preceding forward.

Observing Others with Mercy

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. Hatib Ibn Abu Balta, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a female messenger with a letter to Mecca informing the non-Muslims that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was heading to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was divinely informed of this letter and as a result dispatched Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Miqdad Bin Amr and Zubair Bin Awaam, may Allah be pleased with them, to intercept her and bring back the letter before it reached Mecca. The plan was a success and the letter was returned to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who then summoned Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, and questioned him about his letter. Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, declared that he had not apostatized nor preferred disbelief to Islam but he only wrote the letter as he had no one in Mecca who could protect his family and property there and believed that through the letter he would gain their favour and as a result they would not harm his family and property. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed he had spoken the truth. Umar Ibn Khattab, asked permission to execute Hatib, may Allah be pleased with them, for treason but the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, replied that he had fought in the Battle of Badr and Allah, the Exalted, had already forgiven all the participants of the Battle of Badr. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 379 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 3007. In this regard, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 60 Mumtahanah, verse 1:

“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord. If you have come out for fighting/striving in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection [i.e., instruction], but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Noble Life of the Prophet (PBUH), Volume 1, Pages 1684-1685.

Even though the intentions of Hatib, may Allah be pleased with him, was not evil, as he desired to protect his family and property and full-well knew his letter to the non-Muslims would make no difference to the planned conquest of Mecca, as the non-Muslims of Mecca were already convinced of this occurring, none the less he should have remained sincere to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and entrusted his family and wealth to Allah, the Exalted. Instead of punishing him for this single mistake the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, observed his entire life of sacrificing for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore overlooked this single mistake.

All Muslims 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.”

Compassion

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca broke their agreement of peace made in Hudaibiya by supporting a tribe who attacked another tribe who were allied with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The truce only lasted for approximately 18 months. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded by Allah, the Exalted, to head for Mecca. When the huge Muslim army entered Mecca in the company of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it was obvious to all they would conquer Mecca that day. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had previously declared that whoever from the non-Muslims of Mecca entered the home of Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, would be safe from the Muslim army. And whoever entered their own homes and locked their doors would be safe and finally whoever sought refuge in the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, would be safe from the Muslim army. He ordered the army to only fight those who fought them but listed a few people who were to be executed if found. These people were not extended security as their crimes were too enormous, such as treason, which even in this day and age is a capital crime. For example, a few years earlier, Miqyas Bin Subaba, arrived in Medina professing Islam. He requested financial compensation on behalf of his Muslim brother, Hisham Bin Subaba, may Allah be pleased with him, who was accidentally killed by a Muslim during a battle. After he received this money from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he killed the Muslim soldier who accidentally killed his brother. Miqyas then fled to Mecca where he apostatized. Miqyas was sentenced to death by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during the conquest of Mecca as he committed two capital crimes, both for which execution was warranted. The first was killing the Muslim soldier, especially after taking financial compensation, and the other was for apostatizing after

accepting Islam. He was found and killed in Mecca. In regard to him, Allah, the Exalted, revealed chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 93:

“But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allāh has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.”

Another man, Abdul Uzaa Bin Khatal, initially accepted Islam and when he was sent to collect the obligatory charity from a village, he killed a Muslim, after a dispute occurred between them. He then apostatized and fled to the non-Muslims and even employed two female singers to compose insulting poems about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, when the Muslim army entered Mecca, one of the men sentenced to death for apostatizing from Islam, Abdullah Ibn Sa’d, fled to a Companion, Uthman Bin Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, begging him for security. He in turn took the man to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and pleaded on his behalf. Even though his crimes were serious, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, still pardoned him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 212-213 and 402, in Imam Safi Ur Rahman’s, The Sealed Nectar, Pages 396-397 and in Imam Wahidi’s, Asbab Al Nuzul, 4:93, Page 59.

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.

The Battle of Hunayn

Steadfast in Difficulty

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. During the battle the Muslim army was overwhelmed and some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, temporarily retreated from the battlefield. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who stood his ground and remained with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Eventually, after they were summoned at the command of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of them pushed forward until Allah, the Exalted, granted them victory. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 451 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 109-110.

In life a Muslim will always face either times of ease or times of difficulty. No one only experiences times of ease without experiencing some difficulties. But the thing to note is that even though difficulties by definition are hard to deal with they are in fact a means to obtain and demonstrate one's true greatness and servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, in the majority of cases people learn more important life lessons when they

face difficulties then when they face times of ease. And people often change for the better after experiencing times of difficulty than times of ease. One only needs to reflect on this in order to understand this truth. In fact, if one studies the Holy Quran they will realise the majority of the events discussed involve difficulties. This indicates that true greatness does not lie in always experiencing times of ease. It in fact, lies in experiencing difficulties while remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is proven by the fact that each of the great difficulties discussed in Islamic teachings end with ultimate success for those who obeyed Allah, the Exalted. So a Muslim should not be bothered about facing difficulties as these are just moments for them to shine while acknowledging their true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience. This is the key to ultimate success in both worlds.

The Siege of Taif

Leniency and Second Chances

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn, some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. The non-Muslims of Taif were besieged for approximately 30 days but they were not conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then commanded the Muslim army to withdraw from Taif and supplicated for their guidance. Perhaps Allah, the Exalted, prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif due to the choice made years earlier, before the migration to Medina, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was given the option of destroying the people of Taif because of their maltreatment of him. But he turned down this option and instead commented that he hoped they would eventually accept Islam. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3231. This choice of protection continued and prevented the Muslims from conquering Taif.

In addition, the people of Taif did eventually take this second chance given to them by Allah, the Exalted, to accept the truth and sent a delegation to

Medina to visit the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 476.

Allah, the Exalted, does not hasten the punishment for the one who deserves it out of leniency. Instead He gives them an opportunity to sincerely repent and rectify their behaviour. The Muslim who understands this will never give up hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, but will not also cross the limits and adopt wishful thinking by believing Allah, the Exalted, will never punish them. They understand that punishment is only delayed not abandoned unless they sincerely repent. So this divine name creates hope and fear in a Muslim. A Muslim should use this delay in order to repent and hasten towards good deeds.

A Muslim should act on this divine attribute by being lenient with people especially, when they demonstrate bad character. They should show leniency towards others just as they desire Allah, the Exalted, to be lenient with them in their moments of heedlessness. But at the same time they should not be lenient with their own bad characteristics knowing that punishment for sins is delayed not permanently abandoned until they sincerely repent. They should also remain steadfast in leniency by replying evil with good according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. 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."

Objecting to Evil

In the eighth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the city of Mecca was conquered. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed of a non-Muslim tribe, the Hawazin, which had gathered to attack him. This eventually led to the Battle of Hunayn. After the victory at Hunayn some of the non-Muslim enemies retreated to the city of Taif. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then led an expedition to Taif. After this expedition the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, returned to Mecca. While distributing the spoils of war a hypocrite named Dhu Al Khuwaysira commented that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not acting justly. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, grew angry and replied that if he did not act with justice then who would. When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, sought permission to kill this obvious hypocrite the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, refused him and commented that this man would eventually lead a rebellious faction who will enter and exit the faith of Islam just like an arrow enters and emerges from its target. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 492-493.

The punishment for this type of clear blasphemy is death, which Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood. In addition, his reaction indicates the importance of objecting to evil.

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

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

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 on desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for 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 and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

The 9th Year After Migration

The Battle of Tabuk

True Devotion

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. Allah, the Exalted, revealed many verses of the Holy Quran criticizing them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 1.

Before departing for this great expedition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged the people of Medina to contribute financially towards it. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, offered half his wealth in charity. Whereas, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, donated all his wealth. When he was asked about what he left for his family, he replied that he left Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3675.

This event indicates their zeal for sacrificing for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This incident is connected to chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

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

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

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

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

Patience and Contentment

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to make preparations for the Battle of Tabuk during a period of extreme heat and discomfort. In addition, the journey would be long and extremely difficult. A total of 30,000 soldiers joined him for this expedition but some held back out of negligence or hypocrisy. During the journey the army suffered great hunger and thirst. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, requested permission to slaughter and eat their water-transport camels. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, granted them permission to do so but before they could Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that this would lead to a shortage of transport. He advised the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to gather all the food available and supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, for blessings in it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, again agreed to this suggestion and miraculously a small amount of food filled all their containers and they all ate to satisfaction. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 11-12.

One of the things to note is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have easily suggested to supplicate instead

of slaughtering their camels himself. One of the wisdoms behind his behaviour is to teach the importance of contentment with the choices and decrees of Allah, the Exalted.

The difference between patience and contentment is that the one who is patient does not complain about a situation but desires and even supplicates for the situation to change. Whereas, the one who is content prefers the choice of Allah, the Exalted, over their own choice and therefore does not desire things to change. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, could have easily supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, instead of giving permission to slaughter the camels. But he did not desire to potentially contradict the will of Allah, the Exalted, as Allah, the Exalted, may have wanted him to remain content. Even though a supplication would have been lawful yet he desired to perfect servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore remained silent trusting in the choice of Allah, the Exalted. Only after being requested to do so did he supplicate. The lesson to learn is that even though some situations appear and feel distressing in the long run the things which occur are better for a Muslim than what they desire even if they do not immediately observe the wisdom behind them. Perhaps experiencing a difficulty may well be the reason a Muslim is admitted into Paradise. So it is important to at least be patient if one cannot be content with the decree of Allah, the Exalted. 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…”

A Muslim should also remember that the one who chose the situation for them namely, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can take them safely out of it. This is only achieved through obedience to Him by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out."

A Blessed Grave

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. During the expedition a Companion, Abdullah Bin Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that he once got up in the middle of the night and noticed a light. When he went over to it to investigate he found the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, digging a grave for a Companion, Dhu Al Bijadayn, may Allah be pleased with him, who had passed away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was in the grave while Abu Bakkar and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, lowered the body of Dhu Al Bijadayn, may Allah be pleased with him, into the grave. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, positioned his body correctly in the grave he asked Allah, the Exalted, to be pleased with him just like he was pleased with him. After witnessing this event Abdullah Bin Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, would often say that he wished that was his grave. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 22-23.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes

comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

Prophetic Sermon at Tabuk

A Comprehensive Advice

In the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to fight against the great Byzantine empire, as news reached the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that they were preparing to wage war against the Muslims, as they became aware of the growing power of Islam. This led to the Battle of Tabuk. When the expedition reached Tabuk, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the following speech: “People, the most truthful speech is that of the Book of Allah, the Exalted. The firmest of bonds is the word (testification of faith). The best of religions is that of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. The best of ways of life is the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The most noble of speech is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The finest of narratives is the Holy Quran. The best of practices are those sanctioned by Allah, the Exalted. The worse of practices are those innovated. The best guidance is that of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The most noble of deaths is being killed as a martyr. The most blind thing of all is going astray after guidance. The best of deeds are those that are beneficial. The best guidance is that which is followed (not innovated). The worse blindness is that of the (spiritual) heart. The upper hand (giving charity) is better than the lower hand (the one who receives charity). That which is little yet suffices is better than that which is much but wasteful. The worse apology is when death is at hand. The worse repentance is on Judgement Day. There are those people who only attend the Friday prayers at its end.

There are those people who only mention Allah, the Exalted, in vain. The worse of sins is a lying tongue. The best riches are those of the soul (contentment). The best of qualities is piety. The pinnacle of wisdom is the fear of Allah, the Exalted. The best quality within the heart is that of certainty (of faith). Doubting is from disbelief. Wailing in mourning is an act from the age of ignorance (pre-Islamic era). Fraud is of the soil spread in Hell. (Most) Poetry comes from Satan. Wine is the aggregate of sin. Women (for men and men for women) are the snares of Satan. Youth is an offshoot of madness (due to lack of control). The worse income is from interest. The worse food is consuming the wealth of orphans. The happy man is he who is warned by (the actions of) others. One of you has only to move four arm lengths away for the matter (death) to lead on to the hereafter. The fundamental of an action is determined by its results. The worse of narratives are those of untruth. All that is to come is near at hand. To swear at a believer is an outrage. To fight a believer is disbelief. To eat his flesh (backbiting) is disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. The sanctity of his property is as the sanctity of his blood. Whoever takes an (false) oath by Allah, the Exalted, gives the lie to Him. Whoever seeks His forgiveness shall be forgiven. Whoever gives pardon, Allah, the Exalted, will pardon. Whoever suppresses anger, Allah, the Exalted, will reward. Whoever remains firm against calamity, Allah, the Exalted, will compensate. He who desires fame, Allah, the Exalted, will discredit. He who remains firm, Allah, the Exalted, will doubly reward. He who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will punish. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. O Allah, the Exalted, forgive me and my people. I seek forgiveness for myself and for you." This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 16-17.

The 10th Year After Migration

The Farewell Holy Pilgrimage

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 152.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise.

The real purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage is to prepare Muslims for their final journey to the hereafter. The same way a Muslim leaves behind their home, business, wealth, family, friends and social status in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage this will occur at the time of their death when they take their final journey to the hereafter. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379, advises that a person's family and wealth abandons them at their grave and only their deeds, good and bad, accompany them.

When a Muslim bears this in mind during their Holy Pilgrimage they will fulfil all the aspects of this duty correctly. This Muslim will return back home a changed person as they will prioritise preparing for their final journey to the hereafter over amassing the excess aspects of this material world. They will strive in fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which includes taking from this world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

Muslims should not treat the Holy Pilgrimage as a holiday and a place to shop as this attitude defeats the purpose of it. It must remind Muslims of their final journey to the hereafter a journey which has no return and no second chances. Only this will inspire one to fulfil the Holy Pilgrimage correctly and prepare adequately for the hereafter.

Do No Harm

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he departed Medina with the intention to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). An aspect of the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) is to touch and kiss the Black Stone which is attached to the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once told Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that even though he was a strong man he should not jostle in order to reach the Black Stone as this may cause harm to others. If he could not find a way to the Black Stone because of a rush of people he should salute it from a distance. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 228.

Even though reaching the Black Stone is an act of worship yet a Muslim is not allowed to harm others in the process. This indicates the importance of refraining from harming others. 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 verbal and physical sins 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 which 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 taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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 will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. 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.

The 11th Year After Migration

The Final Illness of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Practical Role Models

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. When his illness grew intense he ordered a Companion, Abdullah Bin Zam'a, may Allah be pleased with him, to tell Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the congregational prayer. When Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, entered the Mosque who could not find Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, and as he did not desire for the prayer to be delayed he told Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the prayer instead. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, began the prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, overheard his voice and declared that Allah, the Exalted, and the Muslims refuse anyone except Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, then arrived and prayed with the people. Later on Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized Abdullah Bin Zam'a, may Allah be pleased with him, as he believed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to lead the prayer otherwise he would never have done so. Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with him, apologized but added that as Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was absent from the Mosque at that time, he believed that no one was more worthy of leading the prayer

after Abu Bakkar than Umar, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 332-333.

First of all this incident, like many others, clearly indicates that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was the desired choice of being the first Caliph of Islam. In addition, this particular incident played out in such a way that it even indicated that the second Caliph of Islam should be Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him.

The important thing to note is that these pious souls were chosen for leadership as they possessed the qualities of a good leader. The greatest of which is leading by example. This quality all Muslims should strive to adopt as every Muslim is a representative of Islam for other Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the early days of Islam to attend a gathering of Islamic knowledge one had to journey for days but now countless lectures can be found online. Yet, ignorance of the correct path has only increased since the passing of the righteous predecessors. This is because some have acquired knowledge by memorizing verses of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but have not used them to purify their character. Meaning, they did not act on their knowledge. Those who act like this will lose the power to affect the hearts of others through their advice. Some lecturers are like news bulletins that only provide information without stimulating others to act thereby failing in their duty to guide others through their God given knowledge. Non-Muslims

are mainly accepting Islam through their own research of Islam instead of observing a practical example of a successful Muslim. One who desires to spread Islam must make it their priority to purify their character through knowledge. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

When one acts in this way then a little correct knowledge will have a massive impact on themself and others. Whereas, those who reject this correct attitude may possess more knowledge but it will have no positive affect on anybody. This type of person has been described in the Holy Quran. Chapter 62 Al Jumu’ah, verse 5:

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

Most Knowledgeable

Umar Ibn Khattab, like all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, was devoted to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. But it is obvious he surpassed many of them in this and many other blessed things. For example, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that no one except Abu Bakkar and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, would issue legal rulings during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 18.

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

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in

this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

Mutual Consultation

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that the following verse specifically refers to Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, and generally to others. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

"So by mercy from Allāh, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], you were lenient with them…and consult them in the matter…"

This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 28.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. 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 consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult 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…"

Guarding Prophethood

Abdullah Bin Umar and Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, have both said that the following verse was specifically revealed about Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, and generally for others. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 4:

"…But if you cooperate against him [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] - then indeed Allāh is his protector, and Gabriel and the righteous of the believers…"

This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Pages 28-29.

The essence of defending the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is sincerity.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in

the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

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

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Devotion to Allah, the Exalted

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. Before his illness the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised that no Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, would be taken by death until he saw his resting place in Paradise and had been asked to make a choice between life and death. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4428, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the poison he was given at Khaybar years earlier was causing him pain and felt he would die from it. This indicates that Allah, the Exalted, granted him the honor of martyrdom. During his final moments, he raised his sight to the sky and declared to the Highest Companion meaning, to Allah, the Exalted. He was 63 years old when he passed away. He was transferred to an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 343.

It is important for Muslims to recognize why their worship Allah, the Exalted, as this reason can be a cause for an increase in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, or in some cases it can lead to disobedience. When one worships Allah, the Exalted, in order to gain lawful worldly things from Him

they run the risk of becoming disobedient to Him. This type of person has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

As they obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to receive worldly blessings the moment they fail to receive them or encounter a difficulty they often become angered which turns them away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. These people often obey and disobey Allah, the Exalted, according to the situation they are facing which in reality contradicts true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though, desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, is acceptable in Islam yet, if one persists with this attitude they may become like those mentioned in this verse. It is far better to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to be saved in the hereafter and obtain Paradise. This person is unlikely to alter their behaviour when encountering difficulties. But the highest and best reason is to obey Allah, the Exalted, simply because He is their Lord and the Lord of the universe. This Muslim, if sincere, will remain steadfast in all situations and through this obedience they will be granted both worldly and religious blessings which outstrip the worldly blessings the first type of person would ever receive.

It is important for Muslims to reflect on their intention and if necessary correct it so that it encourages them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, in all situations.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was transported by Allah, the Exalted, from this transient abode away into eternal ease in an elevated place on high, the most exalted and most splendid level of Paradise. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

"…it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station."

And chapter 93 Ad Duhaa, verses 4-5:

"And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied."

That was after he had completed his mission that Allah, the Exalted, entrusted him with. He had given advice to his nation and had directed them to the very best in both worlds. He had warned them and restrained

them from what would have harmed them here on Earth and in the Hereafter. Peace and blessings be upon him, the final Messenger of Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Life After the Death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Speech of Abu Bakkar (RA)

Remaining Obedient

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. Due to their intense sadness each person reacted differently to the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, initially refused to believe it and claimed that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had gone to visit Allah, the Exalted, and would return just like the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had an appointment with Allah, the Exalted, and as a result left his people for forty days.

When Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, arrived he addressed the people in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He recited chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 144:

“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all…”

And then said the following: “Allah, the Exalted, gave life to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and kept him alive until he had established the religion of Allah, the Exalted, made the orders of Allah, the Exalted, plain, delivered His message and fought in His cause. Thereafter Allah, the Exalted, took him to Himself and left you upon the path. And none shall perish except after clear signs and pain. Those whose Lord is Allah, the Exalted, should know that Allah, the Exalted, is alive and will never die. And those who worshipped the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, should know that he has died. Fear Allah, the Exalted, people! Hold fast to your religion and put your trust in your Lord. The religion of Allah, the Exalted, is established. The word of Allah, the Exalted, is complete. Allah, the Exalted, will help those who support Him and who revere His religion. The Book of Allah, the Exalted, is amongst us. It is both the light and the cure. By it Allah, the Exalted, guided the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In it states what Allah, the Exalted, considers lawful and what is unlawful. We will not care who out of the creation descends upon us (to attack us). We will fight vigorously against those who oppose us just as we fought alongside the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.”

After Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, addressed the people, they all accepted the truth. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, felt dizzy and fell to the ground and finally accepted that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had in fact died. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 348-349, and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 139-141.

Electing Abu Bakkar (RA) as Caliph

Supporting the Truth

In the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina the symptoms of his final illness began to appear. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away the people of Medina fell into great anxiety and confusion. At this time the Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed to elect Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam. This has been discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 3667 and 3668.

An important lesson to learn from this event is the importance of supporting others in matters of good. It is clear from this and other Hadiths that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to choose someone else as their Caliph. In fact, he even named Umar Ibn Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him. This was the perfect opportunity for Umar Ibn Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, to take the important role as the first representative of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without any arguments or problems. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, chose to do the right thing and help the Muslim nation by appointing the best person for the role. He did not worry that if he supported someone else his rank and social status would be reduced or he would be forgotten. In fact, his honour and social status only grew after this right choice.

Unfortunately, many Muslims and even Islamic institutions do not behave in this manner. They often only support those they have a relationship with instead of helping anyone who does something good. They behave as if their social status will be reduced if they support others in good things. Some have fallen even lower and support their friends and relatives in bad things and fail to support strangers who are doing good. This is a major reason why the Islamic community has weakened over time. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number but always fulfilled their duty by supporting each other in matters of good without worrying about anything else. Muslims must change their attitude and follow in their footsteps if they desire strength and respect in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

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

In addition, even though it was clear Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was the preferred choice by even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet he did not nominate him explicitly. One of the reasons for this is that the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and nominating a new leader was a test from Allah, the Exalted. A test to see whether the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would argue and fight for leadership or submit sincerely to Allah, the Exalted, and nominate the best person for the role. As history clearly shows, they passed this test with flying colours. Therefore, it was a test for them, and a lesson for the future

Muslims to always strive to aid others in what is good. In addition, if he was appointed explicitly by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then some people in the future would have stated the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were never unanimously pleased with his appointment and they only accepted it because they were commanded to do so. Therefore, avoiding an explicit command allowed prevented this false belief as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were left to choose their leader under the implicit indications that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, should be the first Caliph of Islam. This further enhanced the right of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as Caliph, as he was implicitly indicated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and independently appointed by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Concentrating on More Relevant Issues

The nomination of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as the first Caliph of Islam and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, as the second Caliph, have always been a topic of much debate. Rightly guided scholars have often abundantly discussed the overwhelming evidence of their right to be the first and second Caliph of Islam in order to unite the two groups on the truth: the Sunnis and the Shi'a. Even though this is a worthy aim, none the less the average Muslim should not delve into these discussions or other similar discussions, such as the disagreements amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as these are issues Allah, the Exalted, will not ask them about on the Day of Judgement. These issues are between Allah, the Exalted, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 141:

"That is a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."

A Muslim must firmly believe that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were rightly guided and that Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with all of them. This has been proven by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 100:

“And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājireen (migrants from Mecca) and the Anṣār (residents of Medina) and those who followed them with good conduct - Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.”

As these issues will not be asked about on Judgement Day, a Muslim must instead concentrate on the things which will be asked about on Judgement Day. Only after a Muslim has fully understood and acted upon the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, do they have a right to address other issues. As virtually no one has reached this level, one must ensure they concentrate on the issues that are relevant, meaning, the issues which will determine whether they will go to Paradise or Hell.

A Fine Sermon

The day after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died, Abu Bakkar sat on the pulpit while Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, gave a sermon. He said, “O people, yesterday I said things to you that were not appropriate. I did not find that in the Book of Allah, the Exalted, and that was not something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told me. But I thought that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would continue to lead us until he would be the last one of us to die. But Allah, the Exalted, has left amongst you His book in which is the guidance of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. if you adhere to it, Allah, the Exalted, will guide you to that to which He guided him. Allah, the Exalted, has united you under the leadership of the best among you, the Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the second of two when they were in the cave, so get up and swear your allegiance to him.”

Umar encouraged the people to unite under the one who was most worthy of leading them, without showing any signs of envy. His actions avoided divisions and tribulations for the people and strengthened the Muslims for the oncoming difficulties they were destined to face. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 143.

Muslims must emulate him by adopting the characteristics which help unify the Muslims.

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 thought and feeling 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 worse 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 feeling and if they strive 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 themself. 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.

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.

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.

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 themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful 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. 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 without a just reason. 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 then 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.

The Apostate Wars

Leaving Stubbornness

Many Arab tribes apostatized after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Some of them began to follow false prophets and others refused to donate the obligatory charity. These Arab tribes only accepted Islam when it became the dominant force in the region and so therefore, their faith was always weak and based on blind imitation instead of certainty of faith. The false prophets took advantage of this weakness of faith and the people's greed for worldly things overcame their weak faith. In addition, even though the vast majority initially advised Abu Bakkar, such as Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, not to fight against the Arab tribes who had refused to pay the obligatory charity, he rejected their advice. He understood that rejecting that pillar of Islam was disbelief and therefore a clear reason to fight. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 314-317 and in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 1399-1400.

In reality, if Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, compromised on the obligatory charity then misguided and ignorant Muslims till the end of time would have used him as an excuse to openly compromise on the teachings of Islam. Islam would have then lost its essence and only an empty shell would have remained, where people call themselves Muslims yet fail to practice on any of its teachings. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be

pleased with him, was endowed with far-reaching perception and understood this when others failed to. This protection of the essence of Islam is why he fought those who refused to donate the obligatory charity. This perception is reflected in the short statement he gave to those who urged him not to fight those who refused to give the obligatory charity. He said, “Revelation has ceased to descend and the religion is complete. Shall I now allow it to decrease (to be changed or modified), while I am alive?” This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Page 361.

The other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, then understood fighting was the correct choice. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, avoided adopting a stubborn attitude and instead submitted to the truth when it was made clear to them.

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.

A Worthy Leader

During his final illness, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched an army under the leadership of Usamah Bin Zaid, may Allah be pleased with him, to Al Balqaa and Palestine, in order to fight the Romans. This army remained camped three miles from Medina when they heard that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sick. When he passed away they returned to Medina for further instructions.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to order the army to continue with their mission. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, showed some dislike for Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, leading the army, as he was extremely young and inexperienced, and was even appointed as leader over many senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Before his passing, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even criticised those who felt this way by declaring that he was worthy of leadership, just like his father, Zaid Bin Haritha, may Allah be pleased with him, was worthy of leadership before him, even though people criticised his appointment to leadership also. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4469.

After the passing of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and after Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, re-dispatched the army headed by Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him,

some of the Companions encouraged Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, who was part of that army, to request Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, to reassign the leadership of the army to someone who was older and more experienced. After hearing this request Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, out of anger, seized the beard of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and commented that how could he dismiss him when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, personally appointed him and made it clear that he was worthy of leadership. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 325-326.

It is important to note, that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had an issue with the appointment of Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, were not displeased with the choice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They only had an issue with his leadership as he was extremely young and inexperienced in warfare. Having an experienced and awe-inspiring leader is an extremely important aspect of leadership during a battle. The leader who lacks these qualities may well cause hesitation within the hearts of the soldiers when he issues his commands. This hesitation is often the difference between life and death on the battlefield. This is why some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, questioned his appointment as leader.

In addition, Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, was worthy of leadership as he led by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themself and prohibited evil yet acted on it themself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themself then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

Finally, even though Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, was very young yet as he was raised in the correct way meaning, according to the teachings of Islam, he became a noble person and leader. Muslims must pay close attention to raising the youth according to the teachings of Islam so that they ensure the next generation of Muslims become noble and praiseworthy.

For example, 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. 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. 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.

Holding Onto Faith

Prior to the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the false prophet Aswad Al Ansee began to spread his message and forced people to believe in him. Abu Muslim Al Khaulaanee, may Allah have mercy on him, remained firm on Islam which resulted in Aswad ordering for him to be thrown into a large fire. To the amazement of the people the fire did not harm Abu Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him. Aswad was then advised to exile him before this miracle became a means for the people to reject him. Abu Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him, eventually reached Medina during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. After entering the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he was questioned about his identity by Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. As the latter was perceptive, he enquired if he was the man who Allah, the Exalted, protected from the fire. Abu Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him, was forced to admit the truth and as a result Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, proudly seated him in between himself and Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, praised Allah, the Exalted, for showing him a person who He protected from fire, just like He protected the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 28-29:

“They said, "Burn him [Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him] and support your gods - if you are to act." We [Allāh] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.""

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 422-423.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the importance of holding onto one's faith in times of extreme difficulties.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the one who continues worshipping Allah, the Exalted, during widespread turmoil and seditions is like the one who has emigrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his lifetime.

The reward of emigrating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time was a great deed. In fact, it erased all of one's previous sins according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 321.

Worshipping Allah, the Exalted, means to continue sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is obvious that the time mentioned in this Hadith has arrived. It has become very easy to become misguided from the teachings of Islam as worldly desires have opened up for the Muslim nation. Therefore, Muslims should not get distracted by them and avoid controversial issues and people and instead remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their life if they desire to obtain the reward mentioned in this Hadith.

Justice

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, two Muslims requested him to give him a piece of swampy land which was not being used at all. They insisted they could cultivate the land so some benefit could be derived from it. Initially, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, agreed after seeking counsel from the Muslims who were with him at that time. When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed what occurred he angrily destroyed the document which had this decision recorded on it and told Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, it was not fair to give them the land as it belonged to the public. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, agreed with him and reversed his decision. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 149-150.

Even though the decision of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was good as the land would have been used in a beneficial way but Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, believed it was not correct to give them public land, as it belonged to all the Muslims.

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. 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 themself 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. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which 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.[1] 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 which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. 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.

Compiling the Quran

Gathering the Quran

After the Battle of Yamaamah, which led to many Muslim casualties, many of whom had memorized the Holy Quran, Umar Ibn Khattab encouraged Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, to gather the Holy Quran in book form out of fear that the verses might become lost if the memorizers of the Holy Quran continued to die or be martyred during battles. Prior to this, the verses of the Holy Quran were not contained in a single book, instead they were either memorized or written on various different objects, such as rocks, which were in the possession of different people. Initially, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, showed some hesitation as he did not desire to do something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not do. He was very strict in following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But when Umar persisted eventually, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, understood that this was the best course of action in order to secure the verses of the Holy Quran for the future generations. Abu Bakkar appointed Zaid Bin Thabit, may Allah be pleased with them, for this momentous and difficult task. He worked tirelessly in order to gather the Holy Quran in book form. The copy remained with Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, until he died, then it was passed onto Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and eventually to his daughter and the mother of the believers Hafsah Bint Umar, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7191.

They worked tirelessly to ensure the Holy Quran reached the future Muslims. Therefore, Muslims must honour their noble legacy by fulfilling the rights of the Holy Quran, as this was the purpose of their sacrifices.

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

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

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

Nominating Umar Ibn Khattab (RA) as Next Caliph

For the Greater Good

During his final illness Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, sought the advice of the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in respect to nominating the next Caliph of Islam. Each Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, who was consulted confirmed that Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was the right man for the job, as he was undoubtedly the best of them, second only to Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 724-725.

The first thing to note is that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not considering the next Caliph based on worldly reasons, such as family ties, friendship, etc. He did not appoint a relative, like his son, desiring thereby to carry on his name. Unlike the leaders of today, his decision was solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and based on who was best for the role.

In addition, Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. 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 consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult 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…”

Fearing Leadership

When Abu Bakkar made his decision to appoint Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, as the next Caliph, the latter blankly refused out of fear for the trials leadership brings with it. But, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted until he forced Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to agree. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Page 728.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themself but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Obeying in Good Things

During his final illness, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, publicly addressed the people of Medina and informed him of his decision to appoint Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, as the next Caliph of Islam. They all declared that they would listen and obey Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Page 728.

According to one account, before naming Umar Ibn Khattab, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the people if they would be content with the person he chose. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, stood up and declared they would not be pleased unless it was Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 71.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

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

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

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Sending Ahead Good

During his final illness, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised his family to wash the clothes he was wearing and enshroud him in them, instead of buying a new garment as his shroud. When he was requested for permission to buy a new shroud, he replied that the living were more deserving of new garments than the dead. Even though Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was the Caliph of the Muslim nation, yet he chose to lead a simple life, a life of poverty, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He was too busy striving to benefit the people to worry about his own needs. By sacrificing his own comfort he aimed to make the lives of his people comfortable. The paltry salary he took from the treasury over his two years as Caliph was also returned to the public treasury thereby ensuring he served the Muslims solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. He took nothing from this world and the world took nothing from him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 734-735.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, concentrated more on preparing for his final journey to the hereafter then to accumulate, hoard and enjoy the luxuries of this world. How far are the leaders of today and the common Muslims from this blessed attitude!

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6514, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that two things abandon a deceased at their grave and only one thing remains with them. The two things which abandon them are their family and wealth and the only thing which remains with them are their deeds.

Throughout history people have always concentrated the majority of their efforts to obtaining wealth and a happy family. Even though Islam does not prohibit these things as they may be required to fulfill one's responsibilities for example, wealth is required to support one's dependents. Islam only discourages Muslims from striving for them beyond their needs and prioritizing them over more important duties, such as performing righteous deeds.

One must strive to obtain the needed wealth to fulfill their responsibilities according to the teachings of Islam and obtain a family which will encourage them to prepare for the hereafter. These are both considered good deeds when utilized in such a manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6373. This is the sign of an intelligent person who gives priority to the thing which will endure and support them in their moment of need namely, righteous deeds. On the other hand the one who allows their wealth and relatives to preoccupy them from fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refraining from His prohibitions are described as losers in the Holy Quran. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 9:

"O you who have believed, let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that - then those are the losers."

Some may incorrectly believe they are close to Allah, the Exalted, as He has bestowed them with great wealth and family. But Allah, the Exalted,

clears their confusion by declaring that the one who is dearer and nearer to Him are those who believe and perform righteous deeds. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 37:

“And it is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us in position, but it is [by being] one who has believed and done righteousness…”

In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, warns mankind that their wealth and relatives will not benefit them in the hereafter unless they reach the hereafter with a sound heart. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

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

The definition of the sound heart is lengthy simply put one cannot obtain it until they sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One’s wealth can only benefit them in the hereafter if they send it ahead of them by spending it on ongoing charity projects. This is confirmed by

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. The same Hadith informs mankind that a righteous child praying for the forgiveness of their deceased parent will be accepted also. Unfortunately, in this day and age many children are too busy seeking their inheritance to supplicate for their deceased parents.

It important to understand that raising a righteous child who supplicates for their deceased parent is not possible to achieve if the parents do not perform righteous deeds themselves during their lives. Secondly, it is not the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, May Allah be pleased with them all, to abstain from performing righteous deeds and hope others will pray for them after they depart from this world. One should strive for righteous deeds while they are alive and then hope others will pray for them after they pass away.

It is important to understand that only the wealth one sends forward will benefit them. This can be achieved by spending on fulfilling one's responsibilities, such as the education of their children. All wealth spent incorrectly will become a burden for the owner and may well lead to their punishment. Those who withhold the obligatory charity out of greed have been warned of dreadful punishments. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that a person who commits this grave sin on the Day of Judgement will encounter a huge poisonous snake which will wrap around them and bite them continuously. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…”

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1658, warns that on the Day of Judgment the gold and silver a person owned will be heated up in the flames of Hell and their bodies will be branded with it if they failed to donate the obligatory charity due on it.

Any wealth left behind by the deceased will be left to others to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it. It is important to note, if a person knowingly leaves wealth to someone who is not fit to possess it and thus misuses it then the deceased may well be held accountable for this also. Conversely, if one leaves wealth behind to someone who spends it correctly then the deceased will face much regret on the Day of Judgment when they observe the great reward given to the one who spent it correctly.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, made it clear in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7420, that in reality a person can only use their wealth in three ways. The first is the wealth which is spent on their food. The second is the wealth spent on their clothes and the final wealth is what they spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. All other wealth is left behind for other people to enjoy while the deceased is held accountable for collecting it.

Hoarding and incorrectly spending wealth inspires one to love the material world and dislike the hereafter as they dislike leaving their much loved wealth behind, which will occur when they die. The one who dislikes the hereafter will not adequately prepare for it.

In addition, if one desires to adopt true piety then they must be ready to spend their wealth for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love…”

In reality, wealth is a strange companion as it only benefits someone when it leaves them meaning, when it is spent in the correct way.

A person would be labelled a fool if they went on a long trip without any provisions. Similarly, the one who does not send their wealth ahead in the form of provisions for their long journey to the hereafter is also foolish.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest pains a person feels at the time of death is when they realise that they are leaving behind their hard earned wealth and journeying towards the hereafter empty handed. A Muslim should avoid this outcome at all costs.

Performing righteous deeds is the only way one prepares for their grave as no other things of comfort will be found there. It is in fact the means for preparing one's eternal home in the hereafter. Therefore, this preparation should take priority over preparing for the temporal material world.

A person would be labelled a fool if they had two homes and dedicated the majority of their efforts on beautifying the home which they will spend less time in. Similarly, if a Muslim dedicates more time and effort in beautifying their temporal home in this world over the eternal home of the hereafter they too are simply foolish. This is the attitude of some even though they admit and believe their stay in this world is short and for an unknown length whereas, their stay in the hereafter will be eternal.

This attitude indicates a lack of certainty of faith and it is therefore vital for anyone who shares this mentality to seek and act on Islamic knowledge in order to strengthen their certainty of faith before they reach the hereafter bereft of all good.

The one who prepares for their grave with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience will find that their good deeds provide comfort for them whereas, the sins their accumulated will only make their stay in the dark grave worse. A Muslim should therefore perform good deeds during their strength and ability before their time of weakness arrives. Each Muslim should recognise the reality indicated in

the main Hadith and act correctly with their possessions before they reach a time when their request to be given more time to perform righteous deeds will be denied. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come…”

They should reflect now on their deeds so that they can sincerely repent from sins and strive harder to perform righteous deeds before a day arrives when reflecting will not benefit them. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

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

Let each one ponder over those who passed away before them and their inability to perform more righteous deeds to comfort them in their moment of need. Make haste before this time arrives and prepare for the inevitable. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 99:

“And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death].”

A Final Counsel

During his final illness, Abu Bakkar summoned Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, and gave him some final advice, which has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 59.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him to firstly fear Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step

closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that Allah, the Exalted, had set obligations that must be fulfilled by day, which He will not accept if they are completed at night. And He had set obligations that must be fulfilled at night, which He will not accept if they are done during the day. And He does not accept voluntary deeds until the obligatory deeds are performed first.

This advice indicates the importance of adhering to the teachings of Islam and avoiding charting one’s own course in life.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If Muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered a righteous deed it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. Because the fact is that the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources even if it is a righteous deed the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many Muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins they have preoccupied Muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a Muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that a person’s scales on Judgement Day will weigh heavy in their favour when they follow the truth in this world, even though it was heavy upon them to do so. And a person’s scales on Judgement Day will be light in their favour when they follow falsehood in this world.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it

leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that a servant must be balanced between fear and hope: fear of Hell and hope of obtaining Paradise. The servant should not consider their devotion as valuable, nor should they despair of the mercy and favour of Allah, the Exalted.

In a long divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405, Allah, the Exalted, advises that He acts and treats His servant according to their perception of Him. This means if a Muslim has good thoughts and expects good from Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will not disappoint them. Similarly, if a person harbours negative thoughts about Allah, the Exalted, such as believing they will not be forgiven then Allah, the Exalted, may act according to their belief.

It is important to note, there is a vast difference between true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which this Hadith refers to and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one fails to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then expects Allah, the Exalted, to forgive them. This is not true hope it is merely wishful thinking. This is like a farmer who fails to plant any seeds, fails to water their crop and still hopes to reap a large harvest. True hope is when one strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they slip up they sincerely repent and then hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. This is like a farmer who plants seeds, waters their crop, dedicates effort to

keeping the crop healthy and then hopes for a large harvest. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has summarised this explanation in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should harbour more fear of Allah, the Exalted, during their life as it prevents sins which is superior to hope which inspires one to perform righteous deeds especially, the voluntary type. But during periods of illness and difficulty and especially at the time of death a Muslim should have nothing but hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even if they have spent their life disobeying Him as this has specifically been commanded by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2877.

The Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

A Humble Caliph

When he became Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ascended the pulpit and was about to sit on the same level Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to sit on, which was one level below the seat the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to sit on. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, paused and commented that he did not desire Allah, the Exalted, to see him putting himself on the same level as Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. He then sat one level below the level Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, would sit on. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 172.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily…"

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them.

And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themself if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

"And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly…"

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

"That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous."

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

A Humble Sermon

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following short sermon has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 96.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, first supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, that he was rough and asked Him to make him soft.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…”

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, that he was stingy and asked Him to make him generous. History clearly shows Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was generous yet desired to become more so.

An aspect of hypocrisy is greed. Their extreme greed places them far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961. They dislike when others donate charity as their greed becomes manifest to others. They also put people off from donating charity as they dislike society labelling others as generous. So they always try to put people off from donating charity with poor reasons such as labelling charities as con artists. These people should be ignored as Allah, the Exalted, judges people on their intention which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. So even if their donated wealth does not reach the poor as long as a person donates through a trustworthy well known charity they will receive their reward according to their intention. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 67:

“The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right and close their hands…”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, that he was weak and asked Him to make him strong.

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

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

A Beautiful Sermon – 1

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 172.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said that Allah, the Exalted, was testing him with the people by making him Caliph.

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 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 and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

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.

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then said that Allah, the Exalted, was testing the people with him.

The test for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, was whether they would sincerely obey their leader in matters which were good or not.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the leaders of society. This includes kindly offering them the best advice and supporting them in their good decisions by any means necessary, such as financial or physical help. According to a Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book number 56, Hadith number 20, fulfilling this duty pleases Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

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

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

To be deceitful towards the leaders is a sign of hypocrisy, which one must avoid at all times. Sincerity also includes striving to obey them in

matters which unite society on good and warning against anything which causes disruption in society.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then said that he would not delegate a matter to anyone else when he could deal with it directly himself.

This indicates the importance of being independent.

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. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting 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 their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then said that he would only delegate a matter to someone else when he could not deal with it directly himself. He would select someone who was capable and trustworthy.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

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 the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. 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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then said that he would reward his governors if they did well but punish them if they failed in their duties.

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.

A Beautiful Sermon – 2

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 172-173.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to regularly recite the Holy Quran and act upon it so that they become among its people.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Quran. Sincerity towards the Holy Quran includes having deep respect and love for the words of Allah, the Exalted. This sincerity is proven when one fulfils the three aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it correctly and regularly. The second is to understand its teachings through a reliable source and teacher. The final aspect is to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran with the aim of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The sincere Muslim gives priority to acting on its teachings over acting on their desires which contradict the Holy Quran. Modelling one's character on the Holy Quran is the sign of true sincerity towards the book of Allah, the Exalted. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1342.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to bring themselves to account before they are brought to account on Judgement Day.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to prepare for the Great Parade on the Day when they will be brought to judgement before Allah, the Exalted, and not a single secret will be hidden from Him.

Preparing for the Day of Judgement involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

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

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

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also

prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that there was no obedience to a person if it meant disobedience to Allah, the Exalted.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious

jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain

fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

A Beautiful Sermon – 3

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 173-174.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that as he was appointed Caliph over them, his harshness would only be applied to wrongdoers and oppressors. He would not allow anyone to transgress upon others and he would force them to submit to the truth.

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

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

praise and other forms of compensation from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

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

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

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

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is to hate for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This means one should dislike the things Allah, the Exalted, dislikes such as His disobedience. It is important to note, this does not mean one should hate others as people can sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. Instead a Muslim should dislike the sin itself which is proven by them avoiding it and warning others against it also. Muslims should continue to advise others instead of breaking ties with them as this act of kindness may well cause them to sincerely repent. This includes not disliking things based on one’s own feelings, such as an action, which is lawful. Finally the proof of one disliking for the sake of

Allah, the Exalted, is that when they show their dislike through their words and actions it will never be in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Meaning, their dislike for something will never cause them to commit a sin as this would prove that their dislike for something is for their own sake.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that he would humble himself before those who are humble and modest.

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 be raised in rank when they live with humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility which is pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, promised the people that he would only take the wealth from them which Allah, the Exalted, had commanded him to take.

It is a major sin to utilise the unlawful. This includes using unlawful wealth, using items which are unlawful and eating unlawful foods. It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol are not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, promised the people that he would only take the wealth from them which Allah, the Exalted, had commanded him to take. He would then spend this wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's money on their own personal things they would spend their own personal money on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then reminded them all to fear Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful.

This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then reminded them of their duty to command good and forbid evil.

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

It is important for Muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their 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 effected 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 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. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then reminded them of their duty of giving him sincere advice.

Generally speaking, 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.

A Simple Life

After Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, became Caliph, managing the affairs of the nation distracted him from earning a living for himself and his family. He was then allocated a paltry salary which included: a single riding animal, a garment for the winter, a garment for the summer, sufficient food for his dependents and the same sum which was allocated to any other Muslim in Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 223.

Similar to the politicians of today, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have demanded a luxurious wage but he refrained from this and instead adopted a simple lifestyle, in emulation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides

them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

The Commander of the Faithful

Initially, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would officially refer to himself as the Caliph of the Caliph (Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. On one occasion Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded the governor of Iraq to send him two Muslims who could inform him of the affairs of the people of Iraq. When they arrived they sought permission to meet Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and referred to him as the commander of the faithful. After that he took on this title and so did those who succeeded him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 228-229.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, truly embodied and fulfilled this title as he led by example.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children

are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but refrained from it themself and prohibited evil yet acted on it themself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themself then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

Guiding Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that he would direct the people to the right path. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 174.

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 are 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.

Mercy and Compassion

One of the first things Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did during his Caliphate was to return the female prisoners who were captured during the apostate wars to their tribes who had repented and returned to the fold of Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 180.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had the right not to do this but decided to extend this act of kindness to the tribes who repented after apostatizing. This was his way of reminding the Muslims who remained firm on Islam during the apostate wars to let go of any ill feelings against those who repented from apostatizing.

All Muslims 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.“

Blessing or a Curse

Out of fear of the consequences, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that he was not sure if he was a Caliph or a king. Someone replied that there was a difference between the two. A Caliph only takes and uses the things which belong to the public in the correct manner. Whereas, a king misappropriates and misuses the things which belong to the people. He concluded, that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, behaved as a Caliph and not a king. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 181.

In reality, the difference between success and failure, blessings and a curse is how one uses the worldly blessings they have granted control over.

It is important for Muslims to understand that they should not define a situation as good or bad according to worldly definitions. For example, according to a worldly definition being wealthy is good whereas being poor is bad. Instead, Muslims should ascribe good and bad to events and things according to the teachings of Islam. Meaning, anything which takes one closer to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, is good even if it is seen as bad from a worldly point of view. And anything which takes one away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is bad even if it appears good.

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

“So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qārūn. Indeed, he is one of great fortune. But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient." And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.”

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

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

the Exalted, then it is good even if it looks bad. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Consulting Others

Like his predecessors, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was always keen to consult others in respect to the affairs of the public. He once said that there was no good in a decision taken without consultation. He also once said that an individual opinion is like a single thread, two opinions are like two interwoven threads and three cannot be broken. He would advise others to only consult those who feared Allah, the Exalted. He would even advise his military commanders to consult the senior members of his army, especially the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 182-183.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. 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 consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult 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…"

Good Companions

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would advise others to only seek good companionship as bad companionship leads to many problems in both worlds. He once ordered one of his governors, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, to adopt sincere friends and avoid liars as they cannot benefit him, even if they occasionally tell the truth. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 184.

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 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 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 it. 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. 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 preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

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 they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

The People of the Quran

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would keep those who understood and acted on the Holy Quran close to him in order to seek their advice. He did not observe their age, social status or any other worldly label. Because of this many young people would regularly gather and converse with Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, over the affairs of the people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 185.

According to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, the people of the Holy Quran were not those who merely recited it, but those who understood and implemented its teachings. Muslims must strive to behave in this manner.

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

The Holy Quran is a book of guidance. It is not merely a book of recitation. Muslims must therefore strive to fulfill all aspects of the Holy Quran to ensure that it guides them to success in both worlds. The first

aspect is reciting it correctly and regularly. The second aspect is to understand it. And the final aspect is to act on its teachings according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who behave in such a manner are the ones who are given glad tidings of right guidance through every difficulty in this world and its intercession on the Day of Judgment. But as warned by this Hadith the Holy Quran is only guidance and a mercy for those who correctly act on its aspects according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But those who misinterpret it and instead act according to their desires in order to gain worldly things, such as fame, will be deprived of this right guidance and its intercession on Judgment Day. In fact, their complete loss in both worlds will only increase until they sincerely repent. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

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

Levels of Knowledge

During his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, worked tirelessly in administrating the affairs of the nation according to the correct levels of knowledge. Meaning, according to the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mutual consensus of the learned and in rare cases, independent reasoning. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 186-188.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would also place the verdicts of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, above the level of mutual consensus and independent reasoning. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 20.

This process has been explained in an event during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In the tenth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina he dispatched Mu'adth Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, to govern a province of Yemen. When leaving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, asked what he would do if he was brought a case to judge. Mu'adth, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he would judge according to the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in the Holy Quran. He then replied he would judge according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then replied that what if he did not find the case and its judgement in his traditions. Mu'adth, may Allah be pleased with him, finally replied that he would use independent reasoning meaning, a judgement which runs in line with the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praised Allah, the Exalted, for giving him a representative that pleased him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 140-141.

Whenever a scholar masters the different sciences of Islam they may reach a level called independent reasoning. This allows them to apply the teachings of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with their professional unbiased judgement in order to derive a ruling within Islam. According to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4487, when this scholar makes an incorrect ruling they will be rewarded a single time for their effort. If they make a correct ruling they will be rewarded twice over.

Justice for All

One of the important principles of Islam, which Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always upheld, was justice for all, irrespective of their faith or background. For example, he once ruled in favour of a Jew against a Muslim. He did not observe the differences in their faith and instead judged with justice according to the evidence. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 191.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..."

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Equality

One of the important principles of Islam, which Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always upheld was justice for all, irrespective of their faith or background. For example, a man from Egypt once came to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, complaining that his governor's son beat him unjustly while boasting about his own nobility. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, immediately summoned his governor of Egypt, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, and his son to Medina. When they arrived he commanded the Egyptian to take his retribution from the governor's son. He then commanded him to even hit his governor but the Egyptian man refused as the only one who struck him was the son and not the father. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then criticized his governor, Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, who replied that he was not aware of the case as the Egyptian man did not complain to him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 191-192.

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

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

The Year of Ashes (Famine)

One Body

During his Caliphate, a famine struck Medina and its surrounding regions. That year became widely known as the year of ashes. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, vowed not to eat ghee, yoghurt or milk until all the people could afford to eat these things. Even when a person presented these things to him, he refused to eat them and replied that how could he be concerned for the people when he was not experiencing what they were suffering.

On another occasion he was brought the best parts of a slaughtered camel but refused to eat it and replied that he would be a bad ruler if he ate the best parts while his people ate the worse parts. He instead ate some bread soaked in olive oil.

He would even command his governors to eat the same quality of food the general public would eat. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 193-195.

He always ensured his family lived in the same way as any other family. During the year of ashes, he prevented his son from eating watermelon and stated that how could he eat fruit when the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were starving. He was so concerned for the Muslims and imposed such restrictions on himself that the people feared that he would die. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 411-412.

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 thereby failing 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 to 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 instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themself 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.

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.

Nobility

One of the important principles of Islam, which Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always upheld was justice for all, irrespective of their faith or background. During his Caliphate, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, came to Mecca for the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) and was hosted by a resident of Mecca, Safwan Ibn Umayyah, may Allah be pleased with him. The latter had some servants who, after serving food, remained standing and did not eat with them. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, asked why they did not join them and Safwan, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that the food was only for them. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, angrily rebuked him and commanded the servants to eat while he refrained from eating. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 194.

On another occasion, a tribal leader from Ghassan, accepted Islam and visited Medina, where Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, treated him with respect. This tribal leader then headed to Mecca and while circumambulating the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, a poor Bedouin accidently stepped on his lower garment which resulted in the tribal leader hitting and breaking the nose of the Bedouin. The injured Bedouin complained to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. When he summoned the tribal leader and commanded him to either compensate the Bedouin or prepare for equal retribution, the tribal leader shockingly replied that he was a king and the Bedouin was a poor commoner. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded him that in Islam they were equal. The tribal leader requested time to think and secretly fled Mecca and apostatized. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 197-198.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Law Applies to All

The governor of Egypt, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, implemented the legal punishment for drinking alcohol to Abdur Rahman, the son of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. Normally, these legal punishments are carried out publicly, in order to deter others from such crimes, but in this case the punishment was carried out in his own home. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed he wrote a letter to his governor harshly criticizing and threatening him for not carrying out the legal punishment correctly, according to his orders. He reminded him that he should never show any preferential treatment to people when it comes to the law of Allah, the Exalted. He then commanded him to send his son to Medina, where he publicly carried out the legal punishment on him again. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 196-197.

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.

Removing Bad Elements

Even though Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured religious freedom for the non-Muslims living in Islamic land, none the less he did not allow anyone to break their agreements with him. The non-Muslims living in Khaybar and Najran did not adhere to the conditions they agreed to and because of their evil motives Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, expelled them from their lands. For example, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was once attacked and severely injured when he visited his property at Khaybar. The rest of the non-Muslims who did not take part in their plans were left in peace. Even when he expelled them he ensured they were compensated with wealth and new properties. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 206-208.

Removing bad elements from the community is essential for the safety of the community.

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 their 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 effected 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 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. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Importance of Education

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that he did not appoint governors over the people so that they harm them, slander their honour or seize their wealth. Rather, he appointed them so they teach the people the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 210.

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

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

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

Protecting Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that he did not appoint governors over the people so that they harm them, slander their honour or seize their wealth. Rather, he appointed them so they teach the people the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He concluded that if any person was wronged by their governor they should come to him and he would settle the matter. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 210.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood the importance of protecting the people, their wealth and honour.

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.

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.

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.

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 themself 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.

Fair Treatment

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would ensure all people were treated fairly, even those who were suspected of committing crimes by the authority. He once commented that a person may well confess to a crime they did not commit if they are frightened, detained and starved. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 210.

Generally speaking, Muslims must ensure they extend fair treatment to all others.

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 verbal and physical sins 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 which 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 taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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 will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. 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.

Freedom of Expression

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured people could voice their opinions, irrespective of who they were. He urged it so much that once he publicly announced to the people that if they observed any deviation from him they should speak up and straighten him out. A man stood and declared that they would straighten him out even with their swords. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then praised Allah, the Exalted, for being surrounded by such people.

On another occasion he commented that the most dearest to him was the one who pointed out his faults.

He also once said that he feared that he would make a mistake in judgement and no one would correct him out of respect for him.

Once a man told Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to fear Allah, the Exalted. The people wanted to silence him yet Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that there was no good in people who did not say what was good and no good in people who do not listen to what is good. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 213-214.

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

Equal Treatment

While giving a sermon, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people to listen and obey (those in authority). A man stood up and replied that they would not listen or obey. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, calmly asked him to explain himself. The man stated that every person had been given a single garment from the public treasury while Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was wearing two garments. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, summoned his son, who testified that he had given his father his single garment as a gift. When the people were satisfied, the man then replied that they would hear and obey him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 214-215.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, adopted the principle of treating everyone equally, unless there was some obvious reason why some should get preferential treatment, such as disabled people.

One can adopt this mindset by treating others how they desire to be treated by people.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 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 the 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 themself 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. 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 themself 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 themself 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.

Accepting the Truth

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would submit to the truth irrespective of where or who it came from. He once observed how people were giving large amounts of dowries to their brides and feared that this would make it harder for people to get married. As a result he resolved to put a limit on it. During a sermon he expressed his opinion and stated that if anyone gave above the limit he set, he would seize the extra amount and put it in the public treasury. A woman then stood up and objected to his decision by quoting a verse of the Holy Quran which indicates one can give whatever dowry they desire. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 20:

"But if you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a great amount [in dowry], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin?"

Even though this verse does not encourage one to give a large dowry, none the less, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted that he was wrong and the woman was right and therefore publicly reversed his initial judgement. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 215.

Rejecting the truth out of stubbornness is a sign of pride.

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

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

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

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

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

Hate vs Freedom of Expression

Unlike many people today, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, understood the difference between freedom of expression and spreading hate within society. Freedom of expression allows one to voice their constructive criticism in a peaceful and respectful way without the fear of persecution. Whereas, spreading hate involves unconstructively criticizing and insulting people and their beliefs. The aim of freedom of expression is to destroy the boundaries between communities and to instead strengthen the bonds between them so that everyone benefits. Whereas, spreading hate does the opposite meaning, it creates divisions between communities and leads to disunity.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, upheld the Islamic principles of freedom of expression and standing against the spread of hate. For example, he once imprisoned a person for openly and persistently slandering a Muslim. He eventually freed the person when he promised not to spread such hate within the society. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 217.

Over Praising

A man once said to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, after observing his poverty, that as he was the Caliph, he was the most entitled to the best of foods, a fine mount and fine clothing. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized him as he only desired to please him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 224.

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. 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. 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. They should instead advise others about this Hadith and warn them not to over praise others.

Only in certain cases is praising others acceptable and must include not over praising them, sticking with 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 fulfilling the duties of Islam.

Trustworthy

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once explained to a man who urged him to adopt a more luxurious life that his example with the people was of a group of people who set out on a journey. The people gave their wealth to a single person and told him to spend on them when it was needed. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that it would not be right for this person to spend that wealth on himself and neglect the others. This was the example of him and his people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 224.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

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 the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. 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.

The Islamic Calendar

Once Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, received a document which only had the month written on it. Therefore, he could not work out the year the document referred to. He then gathered the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in order to create an Islamic calendar. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, suggested that their calendar should start from when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 225-227.

This was another act of unity, which was administered by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, as the people of that time would judge time based on past events, some of which were connected to the pre-Islamic days of Ignorance. Introducing the Islamic calendar avoided this and instead unified the Muslims.

Muslims must take all the steps to create unity amongst them.

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 thought and feeling 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 worse 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 feeling and if they strive 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 themself. 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.

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.

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.

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 themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful 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. 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 without a just reason. 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 then 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.

Fear of the Last Day

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would constantly reflect on the Day of Judgement and strived hard to practically prepare for it. A Bedouin once asked for some wealth from him and reminded him that he would be questioned about his leadership on the Day of Judgement, a Day which there was no other destinations except Paradise and Hell. This made Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, weep. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 230.

One must emulate the attitude of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, so that they practically prepare for Judgement Day before their time runs out.

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life…”

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

Taking Stock of Oneself

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had the habit of constantly reflecting on his actions and rectifying them. He once walked through the market and asked someone to move out of his way and prodded the edge of his garment with his stick. The following year he saw the same man and enquired if he was going to perform the Holy Pilgrimage. When the man replied in the positive, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, took him back to his home and gave him 600 silver coins and told him to spend them on his needs and commented that this wealth was for what occurred the previous year in the market. The man replied he completely forgot what had occurred and Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, finally replied that he never forgot. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 231-232.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not harm the man yet he corrected his action when the opportunity presented itself. He understood that the most dangerous deed, after disbelief, is wronging others.

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 two 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 in respect to 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 believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

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 is therefore important for Muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

The Scales

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was always frightened about his accountability on the Day of Judgement. He once commented that if a lamb was to die on the banks of the Euphrates (the edge of the Islamic nation), he feared that Allah, the Exalted, would hold him accountable for it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 232.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment

Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Avoiding the Fire

In order to remind himself of Hell and striving to practically avoid it, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would light a fire and place his hand over it and ask himself whether he could tolerate that. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 234.

The thing to remember is that in reality each person who will end up in Hell takes the fire, which they will encounter in Hell, with them from this world in the form of their sins. When a Muslim engraves this reality into their mind they will observe each sin, major or minor, as a piece of unbearable fire. The same way a person avoids fire in this world they should avoid sins as in reality sins are like hidden fire which will be shown to them in the hereafter.

In addition, a Muslim should not live in heedlessness and believe they can simply claim love for Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, without supporting this verbal declaration with actions. If this was true then the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would not have strived so hard in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and they undoubtedly understood Islam and Judgment Day better than the people after them. Simply put, a declaration of love without actions will not save one from Hell. In fact, it has been made clear that some Muslims will enter Hell on Judgment Day. The Muslim who abandons acting on Islamic teachings should understand that their attitude may cause them to lose their faith before

their death so that they enter Judgment Day as a non-Muslim, which is the greatest loss.

The same way one would not enter a battle without armour and a shield a Muslim should not enter Judgment Day without the armour and shield of righteous deeds. Otherwise, the same way the soldier who has no protection will most likely be harmed so will a Muslim who reaches Judgment Day without the protection provided by the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. A Muslim should remember that the luxuries and pleasures of the material world they enjoyed will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell. In fact, it will only make them feel worse.

The Correct Perception

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once passed a trash dump and stood there, pondering. When he noticed his companions disliked what he was doing he commented that this was the outcome of the world they cared so much for and loved to hoard. This was the outcome of what they trusted most and relied upon for their needs. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 72.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood the difference between the eternal hereafter and the transient material world as he adopted the correct perception.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The

person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

Temporary vs Eternal

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that he reflected and realized that if he desired comfort in this world, he would harm his lasting comfort in the next world. And if he desired the hereafter, he must renounce (the excess) comfort in this world. Therefore, he decided to renounce the temporary abode. He concluded that it was surely better to endure a little discomfort in this life (for the sake of the permanent hereafter). This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 79.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing. Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much

effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, Muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some Muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

The Shade of a Tree

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once set out to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). During his travels, no tent was set up for him and he instead put a cloak or a mat on a tree and shaded himself beneath it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 237.

He truly lived as a traveler in this material world, just like his predecessors before him.

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

In reality, each person is a traveller who stays in this world for a very limited time compared to where they came from meaning, the world of the souls and to where they are heading which is the eternal hereafter. In fact, this world in comparison is like waiting at a bus stop. In this Hadith this world has been compared to a shadow. This is because a shadow does not last long and fades away quickly without people even taking notice which is exactly how a person's days and nights pass away. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

did not mention a traveller's inn or a hotel as these are solid structures which indicate permanence. A fading shadow better describes this material world. This is because no matter how old a person is they always admit that their life flashed by and felt like a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

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

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

This does not mean one should abandon this world as this Hadith clearly indicates one should make use of the material world in order to prepare for the hereafter. The rider takes a rest and Muslims must gather the things which will benefit them in the hereafter instead of dedicating their

time to unnecessary things which will leave them empty handed on Judgment Day. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."

Company of the Greats

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was once advised to lead a more comfortable life. He replied by mentioning the difficult and simple lives of the Holy Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who had already passed away and then commented that he said to himself that if he could share some of their hardships in this world then perhaps he could share some of their comforts in the hereafter. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 74.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that if he chose a path other than theirs, he would not end up with them in the hereafter.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

The Best

A senior Companion, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that even though Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was not the first of them to migrate to Medina (nor was he the first to accept Islam) yet he was the best of them because he was the most detached from the material world. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 238.

This is further supported by another senior Companion, Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, who once indicated that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were the best group, after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, because they were the most detached from the material world than anyone else and more desirous of the hereafter than anyone else. This has been discussed in Imam Abu Na'im Al-Asfahani's, Hilyat Ul Awliya Wa Tabaqat Al Asfiya, Narration 278.

Umar, and the rest of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, adopted the correct mindset in respect to this material world and the hereafter. A mindset which allowed them to detach from the material world and concentrate all their efforts on the eternal hereafter, by using their worldly blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal

hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Becoming Pious

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would only eat from his own wealth, even though he was entitled to eat from the public treasury, just like the other Muslims would. He once commented that he was afraid that the food from the public treasury would become fire in his stomach in the hereafter.

On another occasion, a servant once gave him some milk. After tasting it he questioned its origins. The servant told him that as his camel had run out of milk he milked one of the camels belonging to the public treasury and gave that to him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, became upset and only drank it when he gained permission from some of the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

On another occasion, after falling sick, he was advised to take honey. Some honey was in the public treasury but he abstained taking it until he publicly gained permission from the people to use it.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 238-240.

He protected himself from the unlawful by abstaining from the lawful. This attitude leads to piety.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain

speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

The Slave of Allah (SWT)

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was once walking in the heat of the Sun and a young man passed him riding a donkey. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, asked to ride behind the man but he instead unmounted and offered the ride to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted that the young man ride the mount with him in the front, superior position while he rode at the back. The people witnessed him entering Medina in this state. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 241.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that as riding a donkey in those days was a standard practice, he did not shy away from behaving like everyone else and doing what they did. He understood that behaving in this manner did not reduce his status in anyway. He was a slave of Allah, the Exalted, not a slave of worldly luxuries.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of

obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a Muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A Muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according

to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

Serving the People

During a hot day a delegation from Iraq visited Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. They found him tending to the camels of the public treasury, which were being prepared to serve the widows, orphans and the needy. Someone commented that he should let the servants deal with the camels but Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that who was a greater servant of the people than him. He concluded that the one who is appointed in charge of the affairs of the Muslims is in the position of a servant to a master. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 241-242.

It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's money on their own personal things they would spend their own personal money on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

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

prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience and then fulfil the rights of people.

Self-Reflection

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would often reflect on his state and actions. He was once heard rebuking himself and reminding himself to fear Allah, the Exalted, otherwise He would punish him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book 56, Hadith Number 24.

Merely performing worship will not raise someone to the highest levels of faith. Muslims can only reach this level by purifying their inner beings. This is achieved by removing the negative characteristics they possess and replacing them with good characteristics. But this is only achieved through serious reflection and self-assessment.

When one recognises their own reality this will encourage them to live like a servant and fulfil the purpose of their creation. This will lead them to recognising Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord, which is the ultimate goal. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

This self-assessment is vital for triggering one to take the steps needed to purify their character and soul of evil characteristics which is the path of success in both worlds. Some are so lost in the material world they

never perform this important deed and therefore decades pass by without them changing one single bit. Muslims must use the time of strength they have been given in order to self-assess and change for the better before they reach the final stage of weakness. At this point they will desire to change but they will not possess the intelligence or strength to do so. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412.

One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe those who were given great power and wealth but eventually a time came when their moment of strength ran out and because of their persistent disobedience they were destroyed.

Those who used their moments of strength in the correct way by pleasing Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed by Him in such a way that even after departing from this world they will still be honoured by society.

As the majority of Muslims do not understand the Arabic language an abundant amount of worship will not trigger this inner purification. One can only reach it by reflecting on this material world, death, the grave and Hell. Because of this a single moment of reflection can become better than sixty years of voluntary worship.

Those who live without wisdom or reflection habitually make mistakes which only lead to constant stress. It is these people who lead an aimless life with no higher aspirations and move through each day without understanding their true purpose.

The pious always take time out of their day to reflect on their aims, what actions they have performed and whether they have pleased Allah, the exalted, or not. This mentality will ensure that one avoids sins, performs righteous deeds and if they happen to commit sins to sincerely repent. This mentality fits the advice given by the second rightly guided Caliph of Islam, Omar Bin Khataab, may Allah be pleased with him, which is recorded in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 98. He advised that one should judge their own actions before someone else judges them namely, Allah, the exalted, on the Day of Judgement.

This self-assessment is the key which inspires one to sincerely repent and change for the better. This is the best stage compared to the stage where one only realises their mistakes when another points it out to them. But even this stage requires one to possess good friends and relatives who are wise and sincerely concerned over their eternal welfare instead of only being concerned with the material world. A truly blessed Muslim is the one who possesses these types of relatives and friends who aid them to adopt piety.

Reflecting at the start of one's day also ensures a person prioritises their daily tasks and saves time by avoiding those tasks which should be delayed.

The following verse describes the state of successful Muslims. They reflect on and are deeply affected by the teachings of Islam and strive to implement them in their lives. If one is affected in this way they should

be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, and show no signs of pride. But if one is not affected in this way they must repent and change before it is too late. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 83:

"And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth…"

A lack of self-reflection has caused Muslims to become lost in the material world even though Islamic knowledge is more readily available then it ever was. Voluntary worship will only take one so far but to reach the height of faith they must reflect and assess their character. This will inspire them to abandon their evil traits and replace them with good ones. The vital ingredient needed to stimulate this self-assessment and reflection is Islamic knowledge which must be obtained from a reliable source. This is one of the reasons the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, that obtaining this type of knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims.

Acknowledging Others

A group of people once commented that they never observed someone who judged more fairly, spoke the truth more plainly and was more harsh with dealing with hypocrisy than Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. They concluded that they believed he was the best man after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Companion, Awf Ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, interjected and criticized them for their error in judgement. He reminded them that Abu Bakkar was better than Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, and the most virtuous after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that he had spoken the truth and that Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was better than the scent of musk while he was still more misguided than his people's camel (before he accepted Islam). This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 242-243.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would always honour those who possessed the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and would never deem himself better than others, as this is an aspect of pride.

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

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

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

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

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

Taking Revenge

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was once accused by an ignorant man of being miserly by not allocating enough wealth to him and of failing to judge with justice amongst the people. The man's nephew, who was educated in the Holy Quran, reminded Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, of the following verse of the Holy Quran: chapter 7 At Tawbah, verse 199:

"Take to forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant."

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was angered by the man's comments, once he heard the Quranic verse he reflected on it and calmed down. He then refrained from criticizing the man. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4642.

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.

Finally, 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 and peace of mind in both worlds.

Sincerity to Allah (SWT)

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the people would be honest with their ruler as long as the ruler is honest (sincerely obeys) with Allah, the Exalted. If the ruler was dishonest with Allah, the Exalted, then the people would become dishonest also.

In addition, whenever Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade the people from something, he would remind his family that if they were caught doing that deed he would punish them twice over, as they were his family and therefore had more of a responsibility to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 246.

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.

No Advantage

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade his family from making use of publicly available resources out of fear they would be given preferential treatment. For example, his son Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once used public land to graze his camels which he later intended to sell. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, found out, he commanded him to sell the camels and give the profits to the public treasury. He feared that his camels would be given preferential treatment as he was the son of the Caliph.

On another occasion, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, bought some war booty with the intention to sell it for profit. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, found out, he told him he would allow him to keep a fraction of the profits he made as he feared the booty was sold to him for a cheap price, as he was the son of the Caliph. After selling it, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, allowed him to keep 80,000 silver coins and donated the remaining 320,000 silver coins to the poor and needy. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 246-247.

He even prevented his wife from measuring perfume in order to divide it amongst the people, as he feared she might rub some on herself, thereby taking a greater share than the other Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 250.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, upheld the important Islamic principle of equality.

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

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

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

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

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

Love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Even though many ignorant people have attempted to create wedges between Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, and the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is clear from their interactions and conduct towards one another that there was nothing but love and respect between them. Any ill-feelings between them would only indicate selfishness and greed – negative characteristics they were all free from.

For example, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give priority to those who were closer and more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and those who sacrificed more for the sake of Islam, in matters which did not contradict justice. For example, he once allocated Usamah Bin Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, more wealth from the public treasury than his own son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. When his son questioned this he replied that Usamah's father, Zayd Bin Haritha, may Allah be pleased with them, was more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then his father (meaning, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him) and Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him, was more beloved to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, than him (meaning, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him). This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 248-249.

On another occasion, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, invited the son of Ali and the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, Husayn Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with them, to spend time with him. When he arrived at his home, he observed how Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not given permission to see Umar who was with Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with them, and so he turned back without seeking permission to enter upon Umar, may Allah be please with him. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, eventually found out what occurred he told Husayn Bin Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that he had more of a right to enter upon him then his own son Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. He then commented that the blessings the people were granted was granted by Allah, the Exalted, because of the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 256.

Even when Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, decided on how much regular wealth would be given to the people from the public treasury, he allocated the people according to their relationship with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though he was advised to begin with himself and his own family. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 257.

The family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, loved and respected all the Companions, including Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, even gave his daughter, Umm Kulthoom, may Allah be pleased with her, the granddaughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in marriage to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, even named his children after the first three Caliphs: Abu Bakkar, Umar and Uthman,

may Allah be pleased with them. Would any sane person behave in this manner with someone they did not like or get on with? This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 258.

Umar once kissed the head of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them, and supplicated that may Allah, the Exalted, not keep him in a land where Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was absent.

A sign of truly loving Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to love all those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts one's personal opinion about them. This love includes those who proclaim love through their words and more importantly through their actions. For example, it is obvious to all that all the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them, all the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors possessed this true love. So loving each of them is a duty upon the one who claims love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been proven through many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 17. It advises that love for the helpers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, the residents of the Holy city of Medina is a part of faith and hatred for them is a sign of hypocrisy. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3862, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly warned Muslims not to criticize any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as loving them is a sign of loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and hating them is a sign of hating the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and Allah, the Exalted. This person will not succeed unless they

sincerely repent. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned a similar statement regarding his blessed household, may Allah be pleased with them, in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 143.

If a Muslim unjustifiably criticises any Muslim who demonstrates their love for Allah, the Exalted, it proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim commits a sin other Muslims should hate the sin but they should, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, still have love for the sinful Muslim because of their love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The sign of loving others is to treat them kindly and respectfully. Simply put, one should treat others how they wish people to treat them.

In addition, a Muslim should dislike all those who show dislike for those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, irrespective of if the person is a relative or a stranger. A Muslim's feelings should never prevent them from fulfilling this sign of true love for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This does not mean they should harm them but they should make it clear to them that hating those who love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is unacceptable. If they persist on this deviant attitude then one should separate from them until they sincerely repent.

Respect for Knowledge

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would keep those who possessed Islamic knowledge close to him, irrespective of their age or social background. A Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, once criticized the presence of Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, in one of the gatherings of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, as he felt he was too young to sit with them. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once asked for the interpretation of chapter 110 An Nasr of the Holy Quran. Some people from the gathering gave their opinions while others remained silent. When he asked Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, he gave a different interpretation, which Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, agreed with. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4294.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had a deep appreciation for the people of knowledge and always sought their companionship. Muslims must strive to become one of these people.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever follows a path seeking knowledge Allah, the Exalted, will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

This indicates both a physical path someone takes seeking knowledge, such as attending lectures and classes, and a path whereby someone seeks knowledge without a physical journey. It encompasses all forms of knowledge, such as listening, reading, studying and writing about knowledge. The path to Paradise has many obstacles preventing a Muslim from reaching it. Only the one who possesses knowledge of them and how to overcome them will reach Paradise safely. In addition, it easily understood that a person cannot reach a city in this world without knowledge of its location and the route which leads to it. Similarly, Paradise cannot be obtained without knowing these things about it, such as the path leading to it.

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

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

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

Honouring Women

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always upheld the important Islamic principle of honouring women. He worked tirelessly to ensure they received their rights and were never wronged within the society. He once commented that if he lived long enough he would ensure that no widow living in Iraq (the furthest land of the Islamic empire at that time) would need the support of anyone else. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 294.

On another occasion, a man who was close to dying divorced his wives in order to avoid them inheriting any part of his wealth. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed he threatened the man and warned him that if he did not take back his wives he would forcefully take his wealth after he died and give each of them their share of the inheritance. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 531-532.

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.

Accepting Advice & Criticism

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would accept constructive criticism and advice from anyone, irrespective of their level of knowledge or social background. For example, he once was stopped by an elderly woman, Khawlah Bint Tah'labah, may Allah be pleased with her, outside the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She constructively advised him at length. When someone rebuked her for being harsh and taking much of his time, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized him and added that he would stay standing listening to her for as long as she kept talking, as she was the one whose complaint was heard and responded to by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 58 Al Mujadila, verses 1-4 of the Holy Quran were revealed because of her:

"Those who pronounce ẓihār among you [to separate] from their wives - they are not [consequently] their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. And indeed, they are saying an objectionable statement and a falsehood. But indeed, Allāh is Pardoning and Forgiving…And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment."

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 265-266.

Generally speaking, 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 it 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.

Protecting the Rights of Women

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once proposed marriage to the daughter of Abu Bakkar, Umm Kulthoom, may Allah be pleased with them. She refused as he led a hard life and feared his strictness. Amr Ibn Al Aas, subtly told Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, her response and he accepted her decision without complaining or pressuring her into accepting, a behaviour which was very common in the pre-Islamic days of Ignorance. In addition, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned people not to force their daughters to marry unattractive men, as they like in their spouses what men like in their spouses. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 268-269.

Generally speaking, as indicated by the warning given by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, one can protect the rights of others if they strive to treat others how they desire to be treated by people.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 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 the 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 themself 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. 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 themself 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 themself 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.

Reasons for Marriage

A man once told Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that he desired to divorce his wife as he did not love her. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that not all houses are built on love and he should consider loyalty and appreciation before making a hasty decision. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 270.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not indicate that feelings of love was not important in a marriage but as love is a fickle emotion one must not base their decisions completely on it.

A freed slave once proposed marriage to a woman from the most noblest of tribes, the Quraysh, but her brother refused his proposal. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then spoke to the brother and advised him to accept the proposal as he was a righteous man who would benefit his family in both worlds, as long as his sister was pleased to accept. They all agreed and the marriage took place. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 281.

Generally speaking, one should search for a spouse based on the teachings of Islam, and not fickle emotions or worldly reasons, as this will increase the chance of a successful marriage.

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

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

But it is important to note, that this Hadith does not mean one should find a spouse who is poor as it is important to get married to someone who can financially support a family. Neither does it mean one should not be attracted to their spouse as this is an important aspect of a healthy marriage. But this Hadith means that these things should not be the main or ultimate reason someone gets married. The main and ultimate quality a Muslim should look for in a spouse is piety. This is when a Muslim fulfills the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience. 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.

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. Knowledge is the foundation of a healthy and successful marriage.

Judging Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned that a person should not be deceived by the fasting or prayer of another. Instead, they should observe their reason and honesty. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 272.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which

do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Honouring Others

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to ask a man named Uways Ibn Amir, may Allah have mercy on him, to pray for their forgiveness if they ever met him. Uways, may Allah have mercy on him, lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but did not have the chance to meet him. Years later, during his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, met Uways, may Allah have mercy on him, and asked him to pray for his forgiveness. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6492.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was more virtuous than Uways, may Allah have mercy on him, yet this did not prevent him from asking him to supplicate on his behalf. This is an indication of the great humility Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed.

This is connected to chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily…”

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themself if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verse 215:

“And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

"And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly…"

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

"That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous."

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom's worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Seeking Good Companionship

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised people to seek good companions. He told them to look for sincere companions, as they keep others happy and they will be a source of pleasure in times of ease and a support during times of difficulty. They should always think positively about others until they do something that justifies keeping away from them. They should keep away from their enemies and beware of others, except those who are trustworthy. And no one was trustworthy unless they feared Allah, the Exalted. They should not keep the company of an evil doer otherwise they will be negatively influenced. They should not tell them their secrets and they should only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 277-278.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Nobility Lies in Faith

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give priority to those who served Islam longer and sacrificed more for it, even if this meant he gave priority to serving and fulfilling the needs of former slaves over the noble Arab men. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 278-279.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mistreating Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was always keen to ensure no one was mistreated. For example, he once warned one of his employees not to harm any Muslim and to fear the supplication of the oppressed, as it is always accepted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 284-285.

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 two 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 in respect to 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 believer until they keep they physical and verbal harm away from the life and possessions of others.

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 is therefore important for Muslims to strive to fulfil both aspects of their duties in order to obtain success in both worlds.

Helping the Needy

A slave once asked his owner to create a contract for manumission (freedom) but the owner refused. The slave complained to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who summoned the owner and commanded him to obey the Holy Quran and to create the contract. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 33:

"…And those who seek a contract [for eventual emancipation] from among whom your right hands possess - then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness…"

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 285.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, could have honored the owner and dismissed the slave yet his obedience to the Holy Quran guided him to act justly.

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

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. Therefore, Muslims should, for their own sake, strive to help others in all good things so that they receive the help of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters.

Balanced Diet

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised others to adopt a healthy diet. He told them to beware of over eating, for it causes laziness in prayer and leads to sickness. He warned them that Allah, the Exalted, hates the overweight person. They should be moderate in their eating for that is closer to righteousness and further removed from extravagance and builds up strength for worship. He concluded, that a person will be doomed when they give precedence to their desires over their religious commitment. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 288-289.

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

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

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

In respect to the heart little food leads to a soft heart, humility of self and weakness of desires and anger. A full stomach results in laziness which prevents worship and other righteous deeds. It induces sleep which causes one to miss out on the voluntary and even the obligatory night prayers. It prevents reflection which is the key to assessing one's deeds and therefore changing one's character for the better. The one with a full stomach forgets the poor and is therefore less likely to help them. All these negative effects lead to a hard heart. The one who possesses a hard heart will not be safe on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

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

The one who is only concerned about their stomach becomes distracted from more important things, such as learning and acting on religious knowledge. Muslims should know that the most fed in this world will be the hungriest on the Day of Judgment. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2478.

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

Encouraging Exercise

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was concerned about the physical health of others, as well as their spiritual health. He would advise others to teach their children swimming, archery and horse riding. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 289.

The Holy Quran has advised against those activities which provide no benefit in this world and in the next. But all other activities, even if they appear worldly, such as exercise are lawful. For example, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were encouraged to practice horse riding and archery by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3608, as these are a form of exercise and self-defense training. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Imam Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, number 420, that one of best physical activities is swimming which modern science also testifies too. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even gave permission to a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, to race against another person in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4678, thereby proving such sports are lawful in Islam. According to the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, even they raced each other on two occasions. Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, won the first race and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, won the second. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2578. Finally, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even took part in a wrestling match when he was challenged by a local

wrestler which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, won. This incident has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4078.

All the activities which derive a benefit to someone's physical, mental or social state are lawful in Islam as long as the conditions set by Islam are fulfilled. This mentality has been summed up in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 43, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that he disliked the one who was too strict in their voluntary acts of worship. Unfortunately, some incorrectly claim that Islam is a tough religion. This can occur when uneducated people misinterpret the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. According to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287, Allah, the Exalted, loves a simple religion. This statement can also be observed in the Holy Quran where it clearly declares that Allah, the Exalted, does not desire hardship for mankind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"…Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…"

Islam advises Muslims to live in such a way so that this material world and their faith walk hand in hand. Unfortunately, some have twisted this philosophy to suit their own desires. They take part in many pointless things and claim they are living up to this mentality. They fail to recognize that only those things in the material world which provide genuine benefit in this world or in the next fall within this statement. For example, playing sports is a form of exercise which is beneficial for the body. Working to

earn lawful provision is useful as one can fulfill their needs through it. Playing with one's children helps to strengthen the bond of love with them. All these are worldly acts which provide some benefit and thus fall under the statement mentioned earlier as long as they are done moderately meaning, in a balanced way. But those acts that provide no benefit in this world or in the next are not included in this statement. One needs to learn from the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to determine the balance they should adopt in this world so that they can gain success in both worlds.

Gentleness in all Matters

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once enquired about a man who he had not seen for a while. He was told that he had become addicted to alcohol and therefore stayed away from him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote a letter to him and quoted the following verses, and prayed for his repentance. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 1-3:

"Ḥā, Meem. The revelation of the Book [the Qur'ān] is from Allāh, the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. The forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of abundance. There is no deity except Him; to Him is the destination."

After receiving his letter, the man recited the verses repeatedly and eventually repented from his sins. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed, he told others that one should be soft with others by correcting them, praying for them and avoid aiding the Devil against them, by pushing them further away from Islam through harshness. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 289-290.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…"

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Avoiding Disunity

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would take steps to ensure unity amongst the Muslims. For example, he once advised people not to hold regular private meetings as this may cause people to form groups and factions. This would lead to disunity amongst the Muslims. Instead, they should make their gatherings open for everyone so that love spreads within the society. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 291.

Muslims must strive to take steps to avoid disunity within society.

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 thought and feeling 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 worse 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 feeling and if they strive 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 themself. 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.

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.

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.

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 themself as perfect while seeing others as imperfect. This prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others and encourages them to dislike others.

Another thing mentioned in the main Hadith is that true piety is not in one's physical appearance, such as wearing beautiful 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. 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 without a just reason. 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 then 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.

Maintaining the Purity of Islam

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, took great steps to ensure people adhered strictly to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoided all other things. For example, when some non-Companions began to worship at the tree they assumed was the tree under which the pledge of Ridwan took place, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade them from doing this and ordered for that tree to be cut down. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 296.

On another occasion, in a sermon he said that those who follow their own personal opinions are the enemies of the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They fail to memorize and act on these traditions and make decisions based on their own opinions. They have become misguided and misguide others. He emphasized that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, always adhered to these traditions. He concluded that they would not become misguided as long as they adhered to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 298.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If Muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered a righteous deed it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. Because the fact is that the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources even if it is a righteous deed the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many Muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins they have preoccupied Muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a Muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

Trusting in Allah (SWT)

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once asked about a group of people who told him that they were those who trusted in Allah, the Exalted. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, rebuked them by commenting they were actually lazy people who expected others to do things for them. He concluded that those who trust in Allah, the Exalted, sow seeds in the ground and then put their trust in Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 297-298.

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

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

"…And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him…"

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

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

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

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

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

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

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah,

number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides

will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

Avoiding Fanaticism

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned people to maintain their link to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid becoming to pre-occupied with other things. He warned that the past nations were destroyed because they prioritized the books of their scholars and priests over the Torah and Bible, until they neglected them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 298.

Even though studying the teachings of rightly-guided scholars is important, one must still keep an active and direct link to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as many of the teachings of scholars discuss side issues not addressed in the two sources of guidance. Issues, which will not be questioned about on the Day of Judgement.

In addition, 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.

Establishing the Obligatory Prayers

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strove hard to ensure the pillars of Islam were being fulfilled, the greatest of which is the obligatory prayers. He once wrote to his governors warning them to ensure the Muslims adhered to the obligatory prayers. He told them the prayers were one of the most important issues to him. Whoever established their prayers had protected their religious commitment and was doing well. But whoever neglected it would be more likely to neglect other religious obligations. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 300-301.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

"And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let

them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms…"

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

"And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer…"

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

"…But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it…"

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This

is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

"…Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma'un, verses 4-5:

"So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer."

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that

delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta

Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

"…and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]."

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires.

Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

The Reviver of Religion

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was eager to establish the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in congregational prayer for three nights in a row during the nights of Ramadan. But after the fourth night he did not lead them in prayer and commented he was afraid that this prayer (Tarawih) would become obligatory on them. Therefore, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would offer these prayers during the month of Ramadan individually or in small groups. During his Caliphate, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, revived this tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and united the Muslims in offering this prayer in congregation once again. This has been discussed in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, Numbers 2012 and 2010.

As Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, guided the Muslims to this tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he will gain the reward for everyone who acts upon it.

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 are 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.

Means to Salvation

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would advise people to spend some time in isolation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 309.

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.

One of the things mentioned in this Hadith 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 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 Islamic teachings more which is beneficial in all aspects of one's life.

Avoiding Usury

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would take steps to ensure people did not trade unlawfully in the marketplaces. For example, he would declare that the one who did not know about usury should not trade in their marketplaces. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 312.

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue

that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and

their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their greed for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Earning Provision

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would encourage people to avoid laziness and becoming dependent on others by striving to earn lawful provision. For example, he once said that if it was not for trading people would become dependent on others. He also said that earning through physical labor is better than begging from people. On another occasion, he encouraged people to take up trade and not become dependent on others. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 314.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah,

the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Patrolling Medina

Concern for Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, struggled hard to ensure his people had a comfortable and safe life. He would personally participate in the night time patrol of Medina.

He once came across a baby who was crying for a prolonged amount of time. He rebuked the child's mother, who replied, while being unaware who she was talking to, that she was trying to wean the child off her milk. When he questioned the reason, she replied that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would only provide a regular financial benefit to children who had been weaned off breastmilk. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then rebuked himself and publicly gave the order that all children would be given a regular financial benefit and he wrote instructions to that effect to all the other Islamic regions. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 317.

One must adopt this attitude of being concerned for others.

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 thereby failing 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 to 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 instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themself 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.

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.

Family Ties

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, struggled hard to ensure his people had a comfortable and safe life. He would personally participate in the night time patrol of Medina.

On one occasion, he overheard a woman expressing her distress of missing her husband in poetry. Her husband was away on a military expedition. After consulting his daughter, the mother of the believers, Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with her, he set a limit on how long a solider could be away from his wife namely, four months. The soldiers who did not return to their families after this period were given an option to either return, send financial maintenance to their families or divorce their wives. But if they decided to divorce, then they were obliged to send financial maintenance to them to cover the past period. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 318-319.

This behaviour encouraged a good relationship with one's family.

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. 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 neither 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.

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.

Helping Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, struggled hard to ensure his people had a comfortable and safe life. He would personally participate in the night time patrol of Medina.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came across a woman and her children who had set up camp outside Medina. They had nothing to eat and so Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, rushed back to the public treasury and brought back some ingredients and cooked for them. After the family ate, he advised the woman to meet the Caliph the next day so that he could give her some financial maintenance. He then left while observing her children playing. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 321-323.

Generally speaking, Allah, the Exalted, gives people according to what they do. For example, the Holy Quran mentions that if one remembers Allah, the Exalted, He in turn will remember them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

"So remember Me; I will remember you…"

Feeding others for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is just the same. The one who performs this righteous deed will be fed food from Paradise and whoever gives drink to others will be given drink from Paradise on Judgement Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449.

When asked about the best type of Islam the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6236, that feeding others and greeting others with kind speech are the best traits in Islam.

Muslims should make it a top priority to act on this righteous deed and strive to feed others especially, the poor on a regular basis. This is an amazing deed which does not require much wealth. Each person should feed others according to their capacity even if it is only half a date fruit as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1417, that this will protect them from the fire of Hell on Judgement Day. This leaves people with no excuse from abstaining from this righteous deed.

Cure for Corruption

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, struggled hard to ensure his people had a comfortable and safe life. He would personally participate in the night time patrol of Medina.

On one occasion, he overheard a mother ordering her daughter to dilute milk with water in order to increase its volume thereby increasing its sale price. The daughter warned the mother that Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had forbidden people from doing this. The mother replied that neither Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, nor his employees were present and she should do as she commands. The daughter finally replied that she would not obey him publicly and disobey him secretly. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then left and the next morning enquired about the daughter. He advised his sons that one of them should marry her because of her piety. She was eventually wed to his son Asim, may Allah have mercy on him. Their grandson was Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, the fifth rightly-guided Caliph of Islam, may Allah have mercy on him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 324-325.

Generally speaking, one of the things to learn from this incident is that corruption in society begins from the common people. The daughter did her part in stamping out corruption within her society by adhering to the rules.

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a Muslim's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress. The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

Instead of taking the immature path of blaming others for the widespread corruption observed in the world Muslims should truly reflect on their own

behaviour and if necessary adjust their attitude. Otherwise, corruption in society will only increase with the passing of time. No one should believe that as they are not in an influential social position they have no effect on the corruption which occurs in society. As proven by this discussion corruption occurs because of the negative behaviour of the general public and it therefore can only be removed by the good behaviour of the general public. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

"…Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves…"

Compassion to All Creatures

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, adopted the important principle of treating all creatures with mercy and compassion.

He would often rebuke the people who did not take care of their animals correctly. He made it clear the animals under their care had rights over them which could not be neglected. He even once commented after observing an exhausted camel, that he was afraid Allah, the Exalted, would ask him about it on the Day of Judgement. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 326-327.

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.

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.

Verifying Information

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, took great steps in ensuring people sought Islamic knowledge and acted upon it. A branch of this was to ensure that the knowledge gained was correct and accurate. In order to teach this important principle to people he would request proof in the form of witnesses whenever someone mentioned a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which he did not hear personally. He did not behave in this manner as he doubted the honesty of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, rather, he did this in order to highlight to others and the coming generations the importance of ensuring the knowledge they learned and acted upon was correct and accurate.

For example, Abu Musa Al Ashari, may Allah be pleased with him, once requested permission, three times, to see Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, but was not given permission. He then left until Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, called him back after he concluded the business which kept him busy. When he asked Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, why he left, he told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had advised that a person should seek permission to enter upon another person three times but if they are not given permission they should leave the place. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, asked him to bring him proof of this statement. Abu Musa, then brought another Companion, Abu Sa'eed Al Khudri, may Allah be pleased with them, who testified that he also heard this statement from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 6245.

From this one should learn the important principle of verifying information before acting upon it or sharing it with others.

One can imagine how difficult the spreading of unauthentic news 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.

Gaining Knowledge

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, constantly urged all people to gain and act on Islamic knowledge and would often highlight its virtues. For example, he once commented that if a person comes out of their home carrying a huge burden of sins then hears some Islamic knowledge which encourages them to sincerely repent, then they will return home sinless. Therefore, people should not forsake the gatherings of the scholars. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 332.

He once advised that the death of a thousand worshippers was easier to bear than the death of a scholar who knows what Allah, the Exalted, has permitted and forbidden. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 330.

The thirst of knowledge Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed is indicated by the statement of Abdullah Bin Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him. He once said that the knowledge of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would outweigh the knowledge of all the people of Earth combined. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 360.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, organized financial maintenance to all the teachers of Islam within the Islamic empire, as he wanted them to completely dedicate themselves to learning and teaching. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 369.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had schools built all over the Islamic empire and appointed teachers there to ensure the general public had access to gaining knowledge. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 371.

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

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

opportunity. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

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

A Beautiful Sermon – 4

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. The following sermon has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 334-335.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that greed is poverty and despair is richness.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased will not obtain this grace which will cause them to feel as if their

possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A Muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the choice. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

If a Muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, they will be provided with peace of mind.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that some people amass that which they do not use.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to

the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that some people hope for that which they can never have.

This could be a criticism of possessing hopes for a long life.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is having false hope for a long life. It is an extremely blameworthy characteristic as it is the

main cause for a Muslim giving priority to amassing the material world over preparing for the hereafter. One only needs to assess their average 24 hour day and observe how much time they dedicate to the material world and how much time they dedicate to the hereafter in order to realise this truth. In fact, having false hope for a long life is one of the strongest weapons the Devil uses in order to misguide people. When a person believes they will live long they delay preparing for the hereafter falsely believing they can prepare for it in the near future. In most cases, this near future never comes and a person passes away without adequately preparing for the hereafter.

In addition, false hope for a long life causes one to delay sincere repentance and changing one's character for the better as they believe they have much time left to do this. It encourages a person to hoard the things of this material world, such as wealth, as it convinces them they will need these things during their long life on Earth. The Devil scares people into thinking they must hoard wealth for their old age as they may find no one to support them when they become physically weaker and therefore can no longer work for themself. They forget that the same way Allah, the Exalted, took care of their provision when they were younger He will provide for them in old age too. In fact, the provision of the creation was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. It is strange how a person will dedicate 40 years of their life saving for their retirement which very rarely lasts longer than 20 years but fails to prepare in the same way for the eternal hereafter.

Islam does not teach Muslims to not prepare anything for the world. There is no harm in saving for the near future as long as priority is given to the

hereafter. Even though, people admit they may die at any time yet, some behave as if they will live forever in this world. Even to the point that if they were given a promise of eternal life on Earth they would not be able to strive harder in order to accumulate more of the material world due to the restrictions of the day and night. How many people have passed away earlier than expected? And how many learn a lesson from this and change their behaviour?

In reality, one of the greatest pains a person will feel at the time of death or any other stage of the hereafter is regret for delaying their preparation for the hereafter. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is Aware of what you do.”

A person would be labelled a fool if they dedicated more time and wealth on a house which they were only going to live in for a short while compared to a house they were planning to live in for a very long time. This is the example of giving priority to the temporal world over the eternal hereafter.

Muslims should work for both the world and the hereafter but know that death does not come to a person at a time, situation or age known to them but it is certain to come. Therefore, preparing for it and what it leads to should take priority over preparing for a future in this world which is not certain to occur.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that if someone shows him one thing (an evil action) but claims that they are good in their heart, he will not believe them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themself and replaces them with good characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face

destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised if someone shows him good actions, then he will think good of them.

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. In all cases a Muslim should interpret things where possible in a positive way in order to give the benefit of the doubt to others. Unfortunately, adopting a negative mind-set effects 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. They 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 and feelings. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that greed is a branch of hypocrisy and advised people to spend in good ways and quoted the following verse: chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 9:

“…And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

An aspect of hypocrisy is greed. Their extreme greed places them far from Allah, the Exalted, far from the people and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961. They dislike when others donate charity as their greed becomes manifest to others. They also put people off from donating charity as they dislike society labelling others as generous. So they always try to put people off from donating charity with poor reasons such as labelling charities as con artists. These people should be ignored as Allah, the Exalted, judges people on their intention which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. So even if their donated wealth does not reach the poor as long as a person donates through a trustworthy well known charity they will receive their reward according to their intention. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 67:

“The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right and close their hands…”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that the people must pay attention to the hereafter and set their affairs accordingly.

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

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

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

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that he hoped that he would be saved by a small margin.

This indicates the danger of leadership and how it can corrupt the one who does not subjugate their desires to the commands of Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim’s faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themself but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that whether he lived amongst them for a short while or a long time, he would strive to do right by them.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised that each person must take care of the wealth Allah, the Exalted, granted them.

This includes using the wealth correctly, according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, one can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of blessings.

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

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the

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

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

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

Beneficial Conversations

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured that those who accompanied him always spoke about beneficial things. He became so recognized for this that Al Abbas advised his son, Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with them, who would often accompany Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to never backbite anyone in front of him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 889.

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 behind their back 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 major sins and backbiting has been compared to eating the flesh of a dead corpse 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.

The only times backbiting is lawful is if one is warning and protecting another person of harm or if a person is resolving a complaint against another 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.

This characteristic of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also indicates the importance of good companionship.

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

A true lover could not bear knowing and seeing their beloved facing difficulties and punishment in this world or in the next. This is only avoidable through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they would always direct their beloved towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. If a person directs another towards their own selfish interest or the interest of others instead of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love them. This applies to all relationships such as friendships and relatives.

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

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

Honouring Parents

Even though taking part in military campaigns was required and highly rewarded by Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would ensure that the soldier's parents approved of them leaving. On a few different occasions when some elderly parents complained to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, about missing their sons, who had left on miliary expeditions, he would order them to return to stay with their parents. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 380-383.

Generally speaking, being kind to parents is widely known characteristic amongst Muslims yet unfortunately many fail to fulfil this important duty. Allah, the Exalted, has placed being kind to parents next to solely worshipping Him in many places of the Holy Quran such as, chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 23:

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship not except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff,"[1] and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word."

In fact this same verse prohibits Muslims to even utter a single word out of annoyance towards their parents. In another place of the Holy Quran Allah,

the Exalted, has combined being grateful to Him with being grateful to parents. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 14:

“…Be grateful to Me and to your parents…”

Even though, there are countless Hadiths commanding treating parents kindly a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3662, is enough to understand its importance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, answered someone who questioned what the rights of one's parents are by declaring that they are a child's Paradise or Hell. Meaning, if one treats their parents kindly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they may well be admitted into Paradise because of it. But those who mistreat their parents may well be hurled into Hell because of it.

Even though, being obedient to parents, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is very difficult, especially, in this day and age Muslims should try to remain patient and not argue with their parents. If a Muslim disagrees with them they can and should still maintain respect for them at all times.

Changes to the Two Holy Mosques

Best Places on Earth

The Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in Medina was initially built with bricks above which was a light roof made of palm leaves. Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, made no improvements to it during his Caliphate. But during his Caliphate, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, enlarged it, rebuilding it in the same manner as in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that is with bricks and palm leaves and he also restored its wooden pillars. During his, Caliphate Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, made changes and major additions. He had its walls built with cut stone and plaster, its pillars of stone and its roof of teak.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also made some simple alterations to Masjid Al Haram in Mecca. He moved the Station of Ibrahim, which was attached to the Mosque, to the place where it is now, to make it easier for people to circumambulate the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, and pray there. He enlarged the Mosque by purchasing and demolishing some of the houses which were around the Mosque. He also built low walls around the Mosque so that lamps could be placed on them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 387.

They put into effect the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 738. It advises that whoever builds a Mosque for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, even as small as a sparrow's nest or smaller Allah, the Exalted, will build for them a house in Paradise. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 201-202.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for

studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

For the Travelers

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, allocated a large number of camels to make it easier for people who had no riding animals to move between the Islamic regions. He set up food houses which supported stranded travelers and foreign guests. He organized provision and riding camels for travelers who travelled between Mecca and Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 388-389.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, implemented the Quranic commands to help the traveler. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him], what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for…the traveler…""

The traveler is the stranger who is stuck in a foreign land. Allah, the Exalted, encourages Muslims to give them some of their wealth in order to help them on their journey because they might need help and have great expenses. The one who possesses wealth should show compassion towards this stranger and help them in whatever way they can even if that is by giving them food or a means of transportation or protecting them from any wrongdoing that may occur to them during their journey.

In addition, this can include anyone a Muslim encounters outside their home. 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.

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 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.

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. It is pure hypocrisy to extend peace to others through one's words and then harm them through their actions.

Finally, the main Hadith under discussion advises Muslim 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 the law. 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. 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 knowledge with kind behavior so that the advice affects others in a positive way.

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

Improving Trade Routes

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, took great steps in improving the infrastructure of the Islamic regions, such as digging waterways and repairing bridges. He established routes between different far-off regions in order to facilitate easy travel and trade. For example, he had an old waterway re-dug which connected the Arabian Peninsula to Al-Fustat, which became the new capital of Egypt. This brought prosperity to the whole region.

He also had a waterway dug to bring water from the Tigris river to the city of Basra. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 390-391.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of seeking a lawful living.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that no one has eaten anything better than from the earnings of their own hands.

It is important for Muslims not to confuse laziness for trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Unfortunately, many Muslims turn away from working a lawful occupation, go on social benefits and inhabit the Mosques claiming to trust in Allah, the Exalted, to provide for them. This is not trusting in Allah, the Exalted, at all. It is only laziness which contradicts the teachings of Islam. True trust in Allah, the Exalted, in respect to gaining wealth is to use the means Allah, the Exalted, provided a person, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain lawful wealth according to the teachings of Islam and then trust that Allah, the Exalted, will provide lawful wealth to them through these means. The aim of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is not to cause one to give up using the means He has created as this would make them useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. The purpose of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is to prevent one from earning wealth through doubtful or unlawful means. As a Muslim should firmly believe their provision which includes wealth was allocated to them over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. This allocation cannot change under any circumstances. A Muslim's duty is to strive in obtaining this through lawful means which is the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2072. Using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, as He created them for this very purpose. A Muslim should therefore not be lazy while claiming trust in Allah, the Exalted, by going on social benefits when they have the means to earn lawful wealth through their own efforts and the means created and provided to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Islamic Cities

As the Islamic empire expanded greatly during his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had cities built in the lands between Islamic regions and the newly-conquered lands. He encouraged people to move with their families and aided them with provision and job opportunities. He build within these cities Mosques, homes, markets and whatever was needed to give the people a good life. These cities became learning hubs for non-Muslims where they could witness how implementing the teachings of Islam spreads peace, justice and other benefits to all. This was one of the reasons why Islam was accepted by so many. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 391-393.

Unfortunately, they are some who claim that faith is not required in this world and others who are Muslims claim it is enough to profess Islam without supporting it with sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. But the increase in crimes within society proves the importance of faith and strengthening it through knowledge and action. This is because crimes and sins only occur as a person feels they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, big or small, and no matter what tricks they attempt a day will undoubtedly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will deter one from committing crimes and sins. If people acted in this way peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match

the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his rightly guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

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

Good Spending

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, had new cities built, the homes were initially built with reeds. After some fires broke out within these cities, such as Kufah and Basra, many of these homes made of reeds were destroyed. The governors asked permission to re-build them with bricks. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gave permission but warned them to avoid extravagance by stating that no house should have more than three rooms and nor should anyone compete with others in constructing tall buildings. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 399-400.

Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah pleased with him, who was the governor of Egypt, established the city of Al Fustat, which became the capital of Egypt at that time. He built a house for Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and the future Caliphs, so they had a place to stay when they visited Egypt. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was informed, he commanded him to demolish the house and instead built a market place in its place in order to serve the local people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 405.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2482, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that all lawful

spending gains reward from Allah, the Exalted, except the wealth which is spent on buildings.

This includes all spending on lawful things which is free from excessiveness, waste or extravagance. Spending on construction which is necessary is not included in this Hadith but the construction which is beyond one’s needs is. This is disliked as spending on construction easily leads to waste and extravagance. In addition, the one who spends wealth on construction is less likely to donate charity and spend in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also this behavior often leads a Muslim to adopt hopes for a long life as the one who believes their stay in this world is extremely short will not waste energy and wealth on constructing a beautiful home. The greater one’s hope for a long life the less righteous deeds they will perform believing they can always perform good deeds in the future. It also causes one to delay sincere repentance believing they can always change for the better in the future. Finally, it causes one to dedicate more efforts to the world in order to create a more comfortable life for their supposed long stay in this world.

Actively taking part in unnecessary construction occupies one's time which prevents them from performing voluntary righteous deeds, such as fasting and the voluntary night prayer out of extreme fatigue. It also prevents them from striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Finally, in reality taking part in unnecessary construction never ends. Meaning, the moment a person completes one part of their home they move to the next until the cycle repeats itself.

Therefore, Muslims should adhere to what is within their necessity in respect to all things not just construction so that they can avoid these negative consequences.

Avoiding Pride

When Umar Ibn Khattab, dispatched Utbah Ibn Ghazwan, may Allah be pleased with them, as the governor of Basra, he advised him to fear Allah, the Exalted, and warned him against adopting arrogance as that would spoil his bond with his Muslim brothers. He reminded him that as a leader he would be listened to and obeyed and this would be a great blessing for him as long as he did not feel better than he was nor look down upon others. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 352-353.

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

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

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

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

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

A Muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognise that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace as no one has been

more honoured than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

True Gratitude

When the Islamic empire was expanding quickly during his Caliphate and as a result worldly blessings were being obtained by the Muslims, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would often give sermons discussing the importance of avoiding worldliness. He encouraged the people not to indulge in worldly things and instead focus their efforts on showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. He warned that the more they indulged in worldly things, the less gratitude they would show to Allah, the Exalted, and as a result they would lose out on religious blessings in both worlds. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 402-404.

A Muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

"…And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me."

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please

Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please 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]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings Muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a Muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter. This is similar to the patient who is operated on but feels no pain as they have been anesthetized.

Food Banks

During a severe famine which struck Medina and the surrounding areas, which occurred in the year of ashes, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, organized food banks for the people who came to Medina seeking food. He ensured everyone who came to him was fed according to the means they had. He personally supervised the cooking and distributing of the food to the poor and needy and even cooked for people himself. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 412-414.

This indicates the great sincerity Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had for others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

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

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

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

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one’s sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals

behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Gentleness with Strictness

During the year of ashes, a year when a severe famine hit Medina and the surrounding areas, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, temporarily suspended the legal punishment for stealing. He did this as the conditions for implementing the legal punishment were not present. The one who eats from someone else's property out of severe hunger is not considered equal to the one who steals other people's property out of greed. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that the Holy Quran gives permission for someone to consume unlawful food in the case of severe hunger therefore, this can be applied to taking the property of others in order to feed oneself in a time of severe hunger also. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 3:

"Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allāh, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars…But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful."

The thieves would be strongly criticized and threatened and in some cases were whipped but no more than this was done during the famine.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also delayed collecting the obligatory charity from the areas struck by the famine, until the following year, when the famine had been lifted.

None of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, objected to his rulings as they were justified. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 421-423.

This indicates the gentle nature of Islam.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…”

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Taking Precautions is Trusting

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once decided to visit Syria to assess the state of the people. When he reached the border between the Arabian Peninsula and Syria he was told a plague had broken out in Syria and he should turn back. He then consulted the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on what to do. Some of them advised to remain on course and trust in Allah, the Exalted, and others advised to return to Medina, as taking precautions did not contradict trusting in Allah, the Exalted. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, decided to return and before departing Abdur Rahman Bin Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, arrived at their camp and informed them that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had once stated that if a plague broke out in a country, people should not enter it. But if they were already inside when the plague broke out, they should not leave the country. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5729.

Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, consists of using the means one has been provided in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and then firmly believing that the outcome of the situation, which Allah, the Exalted, alone chooses, is best for everyone involved. Therefore, the decision of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was rooted in trusting in Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2344, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if people truly trusted Allah, the Exalted, He would provide for them just like He provides

for birds. They leave their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening satisfied.

Truly trusting in Allah, the Exalted, is something which is felt in the heart but is proven through the limbs meaning, when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 3:

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

The aspect of trust which is internal involves firmly believing that only Allah, the Exalted, can provide one with beneficial things and protect them from harmful things both in worldly and religious matters. A Muslim understands that no one except Allah, the Exalted, can give, withhold, harm or benefit someone.

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

been made clear in many verses and Hadiths. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 71:

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

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

Actions and using the means provided by Allah, the Exalted, is an aspect of trusting Him. In this respect, actions can be split into three categories. The first are those actions of obedience which Allah, the Exalted, commands Muslims to do so that they can avoid Hell and obtain Paradise. Abandoning these while claiming trust that Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them is simply wishful thinking and is therefore blameworthy.

The second type of actions are those means which Allah, the Exalted, has created in this world in order for people to live in it safely, such as eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty and wearing warm clothes in cold weather. A person who abandons these and causes harm to themself is blameworthy. However, there are some people who have been provided special strength by Allah, the Exalted, so that they can avoid these means

without harming themselves. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, used to fast for days on end uninterrupted but forbade others from doing the same as Allah, the Exalted, provided for him directly without the need for food. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1922. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed for the fourth rightly guided Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would not feel excess cold or heat. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 117. Therefore, if a person turns away from these means but is provided with the strength to endure without failing in their duties to Allah, the Exalted, and people then it is acceptable otherwise it is blameworthy.

The third type of actions in respect to trusting in Allah, the Exalted, are those things which have been set as a customary practice which Allah, the Exalted, sometimes breaks for certain people. An example of this are the people who become cured of illnesses without the need of medicine. This is quite common especially in poorer countries where medicine is difficult to obtain. This is linked to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2144, which advises that no person will die until they utilize every ounce of their provision which was allocated to them, which according to another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748, was over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. So the one who truly realises this Hadith might not seek provision actively knowing that what was allocated to them so long ago cannot miss them. So for this person the customary means of obtaining provision such as obtaining it through a job is broken by Allah, the Exalted. This is a high and rare rank. Only the one who can behave in such a manner without complaining or panicking nor expecting things from people is free of blame if they choose this path. It is important to note, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu

Dawud, number 1692, that it is a sin for a person to fail in providing for their dependents even though they may be on this high rank.

Having real trust in Allah, the Exalted, leads to being content with destiny. Meaning, whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them they accept without complaint and without desiring things to change as they firmly trust that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To conclude, it is best to follow the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by using the lawful means one has been granted firmly believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and trust internally that only what Allah, the Exalted, decides will occur, which is undoubtedly the best choice for each person whether they observe this or not.

The Major Plague

Accepting Destiny

In the 17th year of the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a major plague broke out and spread across the land, especially, in Syria. Many of the senior Companions, such as Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, died. All of them remained patient and obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and readily accept what Allah, the Exalted, had decreed for them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 424-426.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine which their doctor prescribes fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet, many Muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Even though in most cases, they will

never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a Muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

Parting Advice

In the 17th year of the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a major plague broke out and spread across the land, especially, in Syria. Many of the senior Companions, such as Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, died. All of them remained patient and obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and readily accept what Allah, the Exalted, had decreed for them.

Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, gave some advice on his death bed. He advised the people to establish the prayers, donate the obligatory charity, fast, give charity, perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) and the Visitation (Umra), uphold the ties with one another, love one another, be sincere to the rulers and to avoid being distracted by the material world. He reminded them that no matter how long they lived they would eventually die therefore, the cleverest person was the one who was most obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and prepared for the hereafter. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 424-426.

One can fulfill this advice when they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the

Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

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

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

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can

possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

Parting Advice – 2

In the 17th year of the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a major plague broke out and spread across the land, especially, in Syria. Many of the senior Companions, such as Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah and Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with them, died. All of them remained patient and obedient to Allah, the Exalted, and readily accept what Allah, the Exalted, had decreed for them.

Mu'adh Bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, gave some advice on his death bed. He advised the people to strive hard while they had the opportunity before they reached a time when they would want to perform righteous deeds but were prevented from them. He warned them that nothing belonged to them expect what they ate, drank, wore and spent for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, while all other wealth would be left behind for others to enjoy. He concluded that he only wanted to stay in the world in order to spend long nights in prayer, to spend long hours during the day fasting and to attend the gatherings of the scholars. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 424-430.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6442, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person's true wealth is what they send ahead to the hereafter whereas, what they leave behind is in reality the wealth of their inheritors.

It is important for Muslims to send as many blessings, such as their wealth, as they can to the hereafter by using them in ways which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This includes spending on one's needs and the needs of their dependents without being wasteful, excessive or extravagant. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006.

But if a Muslim does not use their blessings correctly they will become a burden for them in both worlds. And if they hoard them and leave them behind for their inheritors then they will be held accountable for obtaining them even though others will enjoy them after they depart. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2379.

In addition, if their inheritors use the blessings correctly then they will obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, while the one who collected it will be left empty handed on Judgment Day. Or their inheritor will misuse the blessings which will become a great regret for both the one who earned the blessing and their inheritor especially, if they did not teach their inheritor, such as their child, how to correctly use the blessings as this is a duty on them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928.

Muslims should therefore fulfill their responsibilities towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and ensure they take the rest of their blessings with them to the hereafter by using them correctly as prescribed by Islam.

Otherwise, they will be left empty handed and full of regrets on Judgment Day.

Fulfilling Duties

After the plague in Syria was over, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, not only sent aid to them but departed for Syria in order to help them personally. He corrected the affairs that had been disrupted by the plague and strived hard to fulfill the rights of those under his rulership. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 431-433.

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 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 and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

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.

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.

Dealing Fairly

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would ensure that his family and his employees, such as his governors, would not use their social position for worldly gain, such as making more wealth through trading. A percentage of any wealth they obtained through personal trading was taken and placed in the public treasury as Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, felt it was unfair for someone to use their social position to gain profit. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 441.

Generally speaking, this attitude indicates that one should take part in business in an honest manner and not use their worldly connections unfairly to increase the profit they make.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In

respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Following the Truth

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always urged those around him to offer him truthful and sincere advice even if they opposed his opinions. He once advised a group of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who he sought advice from, that he was just like them and that they should base their decision on the truth whether they agree with him or not. And urged them to adhere to the Holy Quran in their decisions. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 466.

Behaving in this manner with each other was one of the main reasons why the Caliphate of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, succeeded. Every one spoke honestly, according to the teachings of Islam, and did not fear the criticism of anyone else. Muslims must adopt this trait by adhering to truthfulness in all their affairs.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Noble Behaviour

Under the guidance of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the senior Companions, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, decided not to divide the newly-conquered lands amongst the soldiers. He instead allowed the non-Muslims to keep their lands and imposed on them a tax they could afford. The non-Muslims were pleased with his decision as it made them feel, for the first time in their lives, that they, and not the ruling class, were the owners of the agricultural land. Under the previous rulership, these non-Muslims were simply workers who cultivated the land and got virtually nothing back in return. All the income would be taken by the ruling class while they were left with pennies. The decision of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, encouraged these non-Muslims to ally themselves with the Muslims against foreign enemies and many of them accepted Islam after witnessing the justice and peace which spread across the land due to his Caliphate. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 466-467.

Generally speaking, it is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themself and not others. This is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

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

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

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

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

But those who mistreat others even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, will miss out on the benefits mentioned earlier. And on Judgment Day they will find that Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive them until their victim forgives them first. If they choose not to then the oppressor’s good deeds will be given to their victim and if needed the victim’s sins will be given to their oppressor. This may cause the oppressor

to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

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

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

Financial Matters

As the Islamic empire grew quickly during the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, trading opportunities between nations became more accessible. Due to an increase in foreign trading Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, placed a customs tax on every trader coming and leaving the Islamic empire, just like the foreign nations at that time did. But Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured the tax was minimal, only applied it to those who could afford it and often waived it when it served the interest of the nation. This leniency encouraged traders from different regions to travel to and from the Islamic nation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 468-472.

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

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

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

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

Adapting Behaviour

During his Caliphate, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, treated all the members of society equally and according to the teachings of Islam. For example, he distributed the same amount of wealth to every man and woman, whether they were free or enslaved. When questioned why he did not give more to those who served and sacrificed more for the sake of Islam, he replied that their reward was with Allah, the Exalted, but in matters of livelihood and distribution of wealth, the people were equal in his eyes. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Abu Bakkar As Siddeeq, Pages 259-260.

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, became Caliph, he prioritized some categories of people above others when distributing wealth. The needy were given priority above all others, just like during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, but Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, would give more to the senior and early Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and to the soldiers. He believed they deserved more as the Islamic state was built on their sacrifices. They also had more understanding of Islam and its aims and adhered more closely to its laws and spent their wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, giving them wealth only strengthened the entire community. That being said, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did review his procedure towards the end of his Caliphate and resolved to revert back to the way of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 488.

Generally speaking, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reviewing his procedure and resolving to change it indicates the importance of adopting an adaptive behaviour, in things which are not connected to the commands and prohibitions of Islam.

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.

Fear for the Nation

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always distributed the wealth that he received in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, but always feared the consequences of worldly blessings opening up for the Muslims. For example, when he saw the huge amounts of wealth that was brought to him after the conquest of Persia, he wept. When questioned about his crying, he stated that wealth only leads to enmity and hatred among people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 488-489.

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

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful, beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to

obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many Muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

A Lesson for Judges

As the Islamic empire was expanding, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was pushed to grant his governors and judges the authority to make independent decisions, as they could not always refer back to him. He therefore, encouraged them to always show justice and gentleness in their dealings with the public and implement the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times. For example, he once advised one of his governors, Abu Musa Al Ash'ari, may Allah be pleased with him, to strive hard to understand the cases that he was presented with. He warned him to treat all people equally when he dealt with them so that no noble man would hope that he would side with him unfairly and no socially weak person would despair of justice. He advised him to encourage people to compromise in their disputes as long as it did not violate the laws of Islam. He told him to not be shy of changing his opinion, even if a day had passed, as returning to the truth was better than persisting in falsehood. He should adhere to the text of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and only then implement independent reasoning, which was in line with the two sources of guidance. All judgements were to be based on evidence and oaths. He warned him against becoming impatient, as judging in accordance with the truth brings a great reward. And he should always adopt a good intention so that he received the aid of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, if he adopted an incorrect intention when dealing with people, Allah, the Exalted, would disgrace him.

In another letter, to Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, he mentioned similar things to what has been discussed earlier and

added that he should be gentle with the socially weak one who comes to him, so that they have the courage to speak. He should take care of the stranger, for if the investigation into his case takes long, he may give up and return back to his family without obtaining justice. He told him to strive hard to reconcile two opposing parties, unless it contradicted Islamic law or it became clear who was right and who was wrong, as reconciliation leads to both parties leaving pleased, whereas a judgement favors one over the other and therefore often leads to grudges.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 497-499.

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. 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 themself 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. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which 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.[1] 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 which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. 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.

Righteous Judges

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, only ever appointed righteous people as judges and commanded his governors to do the same. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 501.

The righteous fear Allah, the Exalted, and this fear would prevent them from failing in their duty to judge justly between people.

Righteousness cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot

become righteous until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of righteousness is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Minimizing Errors

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ordered that only his governors could pass the judgement for legal cases that involved legal retribution. Meaning, the judges in each area had to refer the case to their governors for a ruling. But he restricted the cases which involved legal retribution which leads to the death penalty, to himself only. Meaning, no judge or governor could authorize the death penalty without the permission of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 502.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did this to further reduce the chance of any potential errors in judgement.

This discussion is connected to chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 178-179:

"…prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered…But whoever overlooks from his brother [i.e., the killer] anything…This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy…And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous."

In legal retribution there is life as many killers are not deterred from killing further by any punishment less than execution. There have been countless examples where a killer has only served some years only to commit murder again after being released from prison. So the execution of one person leads to saving the lives of others.

In addition, this legal retribution can also aid the mental state of the victim's relatives as knowing the killer has paid for this crime with their life is a way of helping the victim's relatives move on with their lives. But when the killer is only put in prison and in many cases is eventually released the distress of remembering the murder can prevent the victim's relatives from moving on and living in peace. Preventing this mental torture is giving life to them. Similarly, When the government makes a decision regarding an offender the victim's relatives often feel that justice was not served. This is the reason in cases of intentional murder the victim's relatives are given the choice to either execute the killer or pardon them with/without financial compensation. When the decision is placed with the victim's relatives it will reduce the chance of mental stress which would be caused if the government decided the outcome. This again allows the victim's relatives to move on with their lives instead of living a life full of resentment, which in reality is not living at all.

Legal retribution by execution also saves lives by preventing revenge killings which can span generations. So executing one killer prevents many killings.

Legal retribution by execution also acts as a strong deterrent for the general public, which is indicated by the final part of this verse. When

they witness murderers being executed it will prevent those who desire to kill someone to withhold their hand out of fear of losing their own life thereby giving life to themself and others. This can apply to all types of crimes. If the punishment for crimes, such as rape, was more serious then it would deter many potential offenders from committing crimes. Having soft laws is one of the main reasons why crime rates do not decrease in most countries.

An aspect of legal retribution is forgiving the killer. This act of kindness can encourage the killer to sincerely repent from their life of crime. In addition, it can encourage other potential victims and their relatives to forgive their oppressors also, which spreads peace and mercy in society.

It is important to note, that these are all true when Islamic law in legal cases are followed and applied correctly. Convicting someone for murder requires genuine and strong evidence, which must be beyond all reasonable doubt. In addition, this is easier to obtain in this day and age where CCTV footage, DNA testing and other scientific procedures have been produced which can correctly convict offenders to a high degree of certainty. All this minimizes the chance of convicting an innocent person. Even if non-Islamic countries enforced legal retribution correctly in only these certain cases it would reduce crime significantly. In these cases the excuse of avoiding execution out of fear of executing an innocent person does not apply as there is no doubt the correct person has been executed.

But as indicated by the main verse under discussion only those who apply their thinking correctly will understand this. For example, the one who lacks understanding will refuse to amputate a body part in order to

save their life as they only concentrate on one aspect of this statement, meaning, amputating a body part. They do not reflect on the bigger picture meaning, saving their life, and as a result they refuse to amputate a body part. Whereas, the one who thinks clearly will agree that amputating a body part is very serious but leaving it will lead to something worse namely, death. So they reflect on the bigger picture and decide in favor of amputating a body part. This can be applied to the verse under discussion also. Executing a member of society for murder sounds harsh but if it leads to many benefits for the rest of society including the victim's relatives then it makes sense as a government must consider the bigger picture meaning, the well being of the entire society over the life of a convicted murderer or in very rare cases the single life of a wrongly convicted person.

Detachment from Worldly Things

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to appoint governors and judges, he would search for people who did not have an interest in acquiring and hoarding worldly things. He once commented that no one can establish the commands of Allah, the Exalted, except the one who is not trying to please people, show-off and has no materialistic ambitions. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 503.

Appointing someone who was detachment from the belongings of others was also achieved when Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, decided that a well-off person should be made judge. A well-off person would have no need for the wealth of others and therefore not be influenced when making judgements involving rich people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 505.

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

The love of Allah, the Exalted, is obtained when one avoids the excess of this material world which are beyond their needs. Meaning, a Muslim should strive in this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the

necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam. And they should strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Anything from the material world which aids one in these things is not in reality a worldly thing. Therefore, avoiding them is not required. But one must avoid those things which either hinder or prevent them from fulfilling these duties. This is how a Muslim can keep the world in their hand and not in their heart. This is how a Muslim obtains the love of Allah, the Exalted, as this attitude causes them to strive in His obedience which attracts the love of Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

Finally, a Muslim can obtain the love of people by 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 themself desire. Meaning, the fear of losing what one possesses and losing out on the things which their desire through competition with others can lead to negative feelings towards others. If a Muslim instead occupies themself 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.

Ignorance

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to appoint governors and judges, he would search for people who were firm in Islamic knowledge, irrespective of their social background. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 503.

A great distraction which prevents one from submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is ignorance. It can be argued that it is the origin of every sin as the one who truly knows the consequences of sins would never commit them. This refers to true beneficial knowledge which is knowledge that is acted upon. In reality, all knowledge which is not acted on is not beneficial knowledge. The example of the one who behaves in this manner is described in the Holy Quran as a donkey which carries books of knowledge which do not benefit it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

A person who acts on their knowledge rarely slips up and commits sins intentionally. In fact, when this occurs it is only caused by a moment of ignorance where a person forgets to act on their knowledge which results in them sinning.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once highlighted the seriousness of ignorance in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2322. He declared that everything in the material world is cursed except for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, whatever is connected to this remembrance, the scholar and the student of knowledge. This means that all the blessings in the material world will become a curse for the one who is ignorant as they will misuse them thereby committing sins.

In fact, ignorance can be considered a person's worse enemy as it prevents them from protecting themself from harm and gaining benefit all of which can only be achieved through acting on knowledge. The ignorant commits sins without being aware of them. How can one avoid a sin if they do not know what is considered a sin? Ignorance causes one to neglect their obligatory duties. How can one fulfil their duties if they are unaware of what their duties are?

It is therefore a duty on all Muslims to gain enough knowledge to fulfil all their obligatory duties and avoid sins. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

The Superior Ones

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to appoint governors and judges who possessed such strong character that when the evildoer looked at them, they would become scared. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 504-505.

This includes the one who is steadfast on the teachings of Islam so that it appears in their appearance meaning, their words and actions.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best people are those who remind others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed.

This does not refer to those who adopt an Islamic outward appearance, such as growing a beard or wearing a scarf, as many of these people do not remind others of Allah, the Exalted, at all. This Hadith refers to those who learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the purification of one's heart which leads to the purification of their outward limbs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984. This will cause others to remember Allah, the

Exalted, when they observe these righteous Muslims. And this remembrance will only increase when these righteous Muslims speak as they only speak in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they avoid evil and vain speech and only speak on beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. This remembrance further increases when one observes their actions as they practically implement the teachings of Islam thereby, acting only in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. For example, they love, dislike, give and withhold only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Importance of Consultation

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, used to command his governors and judges to consult others in the affairs of the people. He would advise them to consult those who feared Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 506.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. 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 consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult 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…"

Equal Treatment

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would ensure everyone was treated equally irrespective of their social background, even if the case involved himself. He once had a dispute with another Companion, Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him. They took their dispute to Zayd Ibn Thabit, who offered Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, a pillow to sit on and addressed him with his title instead of his name. Umar, may Allah pleased with him, rebuked him and warned him to treat him just like he treated everyone else who came to him for a ruling. Umar then sat on the floor next to Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 506-507.

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

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

Balanced Mental State

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, warned his judges not to pass judgement when they were feeling emotional, such as: boredom, anger, anxiety, etc., as their ruling might be influenced by their psychological state. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 507.

Generally speaking, a Muslim must strive to adopt a balanced mental state so that they make the right decisions in life. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themself to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23, of the Holy Quran:

"In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…"

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets

in both worlds. A Muslim should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

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

Avoiding Anger

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, warned his judges not to pass judgement when they were angry, as this would negatively affect their ruling. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 508.

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 for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. 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 themself 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 themself 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 and 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.

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.

Avoiding Bribes

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade his governors and judges from taking part in business deals or accepting gifts from anyone, as this may influence their judgements, therefore becoming a form of bribery. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 508.

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 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 and punishment in both worlds unless one sincerely repents.

In addition, without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the three aspects of faith are 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 the 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.

Good Treatment

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear that a person accused of a crime must not be considered or treated as guilty until it was proven. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 511.

One can adopt the right attitude towards others when they treat others how they desire to be treated by people.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 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 the 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 themself 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. 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 themself 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 themself 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.

Neighbours

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured the rights of neighbours were being fulfilled. A man once complained to him that his neighbour was preventing him from digging a stream through their properties while both of them would benefit from it and it would cause no harm to his neighbour. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, summoned the neighbour and encouraged him to agree. When he persisted in refusing, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, forced him to accept against his wishes. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was implementing the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4130, that a Muslim should not prevent his neighbour from fixing a beam in his wall. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 534.

The modern day philosophy of abusing one's rights is what Umar, may Allah pleased with him, prevented the neighbour from doing.

Generally speaking, 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 every Muslim.

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. 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 always conceal the faults of their neighbours. 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 publically disgrace them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4880.

Where Greatness Lies

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, understood that a person's rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted, is based on piety and nothing else. On one occasion, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, met his governor of Mecca during the Holy Pilgrimage and enquired from him who he left in charge of Mecca in his absence. The governor mentioned a freed slave and added that he had knowledge of the Holy Quran and knowledge of the laws of inheritance. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then replied that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, saying that Allah, the Exalted, raises some in status through the Holy Quran and lowers others. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 218.

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

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

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

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

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

Desiring Leadership

When selecting governors, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, followed the guidance of his predecessors and only appointed people who were qualified and trustworthy. He once said that whoever appoints a person over a group when there is another person more pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and worthy of it, then they have betrayed Allah, the Exalted, His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the believers. On another occasion, he warned people against appointing others based on worldly ties, such as friendship or blood ties. This is the reason why Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, refrained from appointing his own relatives as governors or judges, even though many of them were worthy of it, such as his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. In addition, he never appointed anyone who asked for leadership. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 45-46 & 49-50.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep.

This shows that hardly any of a Muslim's faith remains secure if they crave after wealth and fame in this world just as hardly any of the sheep will be saved from two hungry wolves. So this great similitude contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after excess wealth and social status in the world.

A person's craving for fame and status is arguably more destructive to one's faith than craving for excess wealth. A person will often spend their beloved wealth on obtaining fame and prestige.

It is rare for someone to obtain status and fame and still remain firm on the correct path whereby they prioritise the hereafter over the material world. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6723, warns that a person who seeks status in society, such as leadership, will be left to deal with it themself but if someone receives it without asking for it they will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in remaining obedient to Him. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not appoint a person who requested to be appointed in a position of authority or even showed desire for it. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6923. Another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7148, warns that people will be keen to obtain status and authority but it will be a great regret for them on the Day of Judgment. This is a dangerous craving as it forces one to strive intensely to obtain it and then strive further in order to hold on to it even if it encourages them to commit oppression and other sins.

The worse type of craving for status is when one obtains this through religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2654, that this person will go to Hell.

Therefore, it is safer for a Muslim to avoid the craving for excess wealth and high social status as they are two things which can lead to the

destruction of their faith by distracting them from preparing adequately for the hereafter.

Life is a Mirror

When appointing people as leaders and governors, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured they were lenient and gentle in nature. He urged all his leaders to show compassion to those under their care. On one occasion, he desired to appoint a man to leadership. When this man entered upon Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, while the latter was kissing his child, he commented that he never kissed any of his children. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized him by stating that he would not show mercy to those under his care and therefore did not appoint him to a leadership role.

He once advised that no forbearance is more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, and more far-reaching than the forbearance and kindness of a leader. And nothing is more hated by Allah, the Exalted, and more far-reaching than the ignorance of a leader. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 48-49.

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 so simple that even uneducated people can understand and act on them namely, 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.

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.

Accountability

Before assigning a person to a leadership role, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would record their net worth and review this after their contract for employment reached its end. If he found an increase in their net worth which did not match the income he allocated them, he would take the profits from them and put the wealth in the public treasury. He forbade them from business transactions, as their leadership role may well cause a bias in their favour, which could be seen as a bribe. He also forbade them from accepting any gifts. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 50-51.

Generally speaking, each person must hold themself accountable just like Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, constantly held himself and his employees accountable.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Terms of Employment

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would appoint anyone for a leadership role he would write up a contract, have it witnessed and it would include the following: they would not ride an elite horse, they would not eat fine food, they would not wear fine clothes and would not close their door to the Muslims at all. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 51.

This forced the leaders to adopt a simple lifestyle, in line with Islamic teachings, which would encourage the general masses to follow suit. In addition, leading a simple life would ensure that the socially weak would not fear unfair treatment from them, as their leaders themselves would be among their social class. And the elite class would not dare assume rulings in their favor, as this is often the attitude of leaders who are drowned in luxuries. Finally, leading a simple life would ensure they focused their efforts on preparing for the hereafter over obtaining and enjoining worldly blessings. This practical preparation would aid them in treating others with justice.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Avoiding Blind Trust

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would not blindly trust people he desired to appoint as governors. He would first test them by observing their behaviour and if he was impressed, he would appoint them. For example, he once kept Ahnaf Ibn Qays, may Allah have mercy on him, with himself for one year just to test him, before he appointed him as a governor. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 53.

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 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.

Advice to a Leader

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, appointed Ahnaf Ibn Qays, may Allah have mercy on him, as one of his governors he gave him some advice which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 53.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him that the one who laughs too much loses their dignity and the one who jokes too much loses respect.

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 have even become physically and emotionally hurt because of 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 other 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 attached to it 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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that whoever does something a great deal will become known for it.

Perhaps this is alluding to the difference between a liar and a truthful person.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's

desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him that whoever speaks too much will make many mistakes and this leads to a loss in dignity. A loss in dignity leads to a loss in the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to a spiritually dead heart.

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 which 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 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.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss worldly things and things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues like 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.

Ascetics

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, led an ascetic and simple life, just like his predecessors, and encouraged his governors to do the same. This would ensure they concentrated on practically preparing for the hereafter, an aspect of which is fulfilling their leadership duties correctly. For example, Salman Al Farisi, may Allah be pleased with him, would donate his entire salary of 5,000 silver coins in charity and earn wealth from his own hands by making mats of palm-leaves. As Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, forbade his governors from trading, as their leadership role would give them an unfair advantage, it is clear that Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, sold his mats while concealing the fact that he had made them.

That being said, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, still ensured his employees received a good wage for their services, as he did not desire for them to be distracted from serving the people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 56 & Pages 63-65.

They adopted ascetism as they adopted the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam

without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Humility

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, adopted humility, just like his predecessors, and encouraged his governors to do the same. This would ensure they avoided pride which would prevent them from fulfilling the rights of those considered weak in society.

For example, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, was the leader of the expedition to Syria, when a Roman soldier came to him in order to negotiate. The Roman soldier could not differentiate him from his men, as they all appeared the same. The Roman soldier eventually found him sitting on the ground. When he questioned his simple mannerism, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he did not possess the comforts of this world, in fact, he only owned a horse and a weapon. He added, that if he had a cushion to sit on, he would give it to another Muslim to use, as he may be better than him in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. He then reminded the Roman soldier that walking on the Earth (instead of riding on an animal), sitting on the ground, eating on the ground and lying down on the ground does not lower the status of a person before Allah, the Exalted. Rather, Allah, the Exalted, increases the reward of such a person and increases their rank because of their humility. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 56-57.

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

be raised in rank when they live with humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility which is pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

Adopting Piety

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, adopted piety, just like his predecessors, and encouraged his governors to do the same. Many of the people he desired to appoint refused because of their piety meaning, they feared disobeying Allah, the Exalted, such as Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, who refused the governorship of Homs, in Syria. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 57-58.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful.

Piety can be summed up to mean fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

An aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things take a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful. And the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It

is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things and only uses lawful things will protect their religion and honor.

If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, it occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech meaning, speech which derives no benefit nor is it a sin, often leads to evil speech such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoided the first step by not indulging in vain speech they would avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to adopt piety as described earlier, a branch of which is to avoid vain and doubtful things out of fear they will lead to the unlawful.

Avoiding Envy

The governors appointed and dismissed by Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, never envied others, such as those who replaced them in their leadership role. Nor did those who did not get appointed to leadership roles envy those who did. Each of them sincerely accepted the decisions of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, as obeying one's leader in matters which please Allah, the Exalted, has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 59:

"O you who have believed, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you…"

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 58-59.

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 it 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 other person which is undoubtedly a sin. The worse kind is when the envier 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 strives to obtain a similar blessing without the owner losing the blessing. Even though this type is not a sin it is considered 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.

Muslim Manners

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would take great steps to ensure the non-Muslims living within the Islamic empire were treated with respect. He urged all his governors to take care of them, as they were under the protection of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to protect them from their enemies, and never to burden them with what they could not bear. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 72.

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 verbal and physical sins 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 which 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 taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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 will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. 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.

Misusing Funds

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, always ensured the public fund was spent correctly. He would urge his governors to spent it correctly and held them strictly accountable. He would constantly distribute this wealth to the citizens and would remind his governors that this wealth was from Allah, the Exalted, and did not belong to him or his family, therefore they must divide it amongst the people correctly. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 73.

Unfortunately, misusing funds has become a widespread problem, especially, within Islamic countries. Because of this, the rich become richer and poor become poorer.

It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's money on their own personal things they would spend their own personal money on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

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

Visiting Paradise

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would dismiss his governors if they failed to regularly visit the sick people under their rule. This was important as this deed creates unity within the society and is a clear sign of a leader's care for those under their rule. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 76-77.

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. They should not stay long thereby, causing trouble to the sick person and their relatives. 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. 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. 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.”

Importance of Equality

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, strived to ensure the important Islamic principle of equality spread across the Islamic empire. He would harshly criticize any of his governors and leaders if he heard they did not treat people equally. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 77.

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

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

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

Steadfast Attitude

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would have no doorkeepers or guards who would prevent the people from meeting him and he forbade his governors from guards and doorkeepers as well. In fact, he commanded them to keep their doors constantly open for the public and deal with their issues around the clock, just like he did. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 79.

This steadfast approach to one's duty must be adopted by all Muslims.

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

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah,

the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

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

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from

this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

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

“…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim’s duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their

heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

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

Monitoring Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would appoint the most trustworthy, reliable and able people to positions of leadership. But he would not give them free reign. He would constantly observe them through other employees.

He would regularly send for random citizens from different areas to question them about their governor and the affairs of the people.

He employed mail carriers who would carry any letter directly from any citizen straight to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, without any other interfering or reading the contents of the letter. This ensured anyone could make a complaint against a governor directly to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, without fearing the governor would intercept and prevent the complaint reaching him.

Umar, may Allah pleased with him, appointed a senior inspector, Muhammad Ibn Maslamah, may Allah be pleased with him, whose duty was to oversee the governors and interact with the locals to ensure the governors were fulfilling their duties. He in turn, had many aids to ensure his duty was fulfilled to the highest of standards.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also planned to journey to every region on a year-long journey in order to oversee his governors personally, but he was martyred before he had a chance to do this.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would make use of the Pilgrimage season, where people from all over the Islamic empire would come to Mecca to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). He would also perform it and spend the time encouraging the people to discuss any issues they had with their governors with him. He would hold regular meetings during the Pilgrimage season with his employees who also attended, questioning them about their duties and the affairs of the people under their care.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would make surprise visits to his governors and gain permission to enter their homes without them realizing they were inviting the Caliph. He would take account of their wealth and belongings to ensure they were not misusing their authority to accumulate worldly things.

He would also regularly test his governors by sending them a bonus, some wealth from the public treasury, and employed people to observe what they did with the wealth. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 80-85.

From his behaviour, one can understand that he took fulfilling the rights of those under his care very seriously.

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 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 and their tongue to utter only lawful and useful words.

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.

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.

Implementing Justice

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would be so strict towards his governors that he would persistently declare to all people over the Islamic empire that if any one of his governors wronged them, they should bring the matter to him and he would settle the dispute personally.

He employed many people just to search for people who had been wronged by their governors so that he could correct things.

During the Pilgrimage season he would invite the people to present their complaints to him. On one occasion, a man stood and complained that his governor wrongfully punished him. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not satisfied with the answer of his governor, he told the man to stand and retaliate against his governor. Amr Ibn Al Aas, another governor, warned, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, not to do this as this might become prevalent within the community and the governors would lose their influence and respect over the people. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, rebuked him and reminded him that during his final illness, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even offered people to retaliate against himself, if they felt he wronged them. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, then advised to make a deal with the man who was wronged and he agreed to 200 gold coins and gave up his right of retaliation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 83.

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.

Love with Strictness

Even though Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was very strict with his employees, yet they all had a deep sense of respect and love for one another. The reason was due to the fact that they were united in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, whenever Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized his governors they would accept it as they knew it was based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. When one's connection to another is based on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, the differences between them will never lead to enmity and ill-feelings. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 103.

With the passing of time people often 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…"

The Decree of Allah (SWT)

During the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab, Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with them, died. His final words included: "…I witnessed such and such battles and there is no place on my body the size of a handspan that has not received a blow from a sword or been pierced by an arrow or spear, yet, here I am, dying on my bed as a camel dies. May the cowards never prosper. I sought death (martyrdom) in the places where it may be sought, but it was only decreed that I should die on my own bed." This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 115-116.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated the infinite and absolute power and authority of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. This Hadith advises that the entire creation cannot benefit a person if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to do so. Similarly, the entire creation together could not harm someone if Allah, the Exalted, did not desire them to. This means only what Allah, the Exalted, decides happens within the universe. It is important to note, that this advice does not indicate one should abandon using means, such as medicine, but it means that one can use the means as they have been created by none other than Allah, the Exalted, but they must understand that Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who decides the outcome of all things. For example, they are many sick people who take medicine and recover from their illness. But they are others who take medicine and do not recover. This indicates that another factor decides the end result namely, the will of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

“Say, "Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us…”

The one who understands this knows that anything that affected them could not have been avoided. And those things which missed them could never have been obtained.

It is important to note, that whatever the end result even if it is against a person's desire they should remain patient and truly believe Allah, the Exalted, has chosen the best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the outcome. 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.”

When one truly understands this truth they stop relying on the creation knowing they cannot innately harm or benefit them. Instead, they turn to Allah, the Exalted, seeking His support and protection through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This leads a Muslim to trusting in Allah, the Exalted. It also encourages one to only fear Allah, the Exalted, as they know the creation cannot harm them without the will of Allah, the Exalted.

Recognising that all things which occur within one's life and the universe originate from Allah, the Exalted, is a part of understanding the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This is a topic which has no end and goes beyond only superficially believing that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Exalted. When this is fixed in one's heart then they only hope in Allah, the Exalted, knowing He is the only One who can help them. They will only submit and obey Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. In reality, a person only obeys another in order to receive protection from harm or gain some benefit. Only Allah, the Exalted, can grant this therefore only He deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. If anyone chooses the obedience of another over the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, this shows they believe that this other can bring them some sort of benefit or protect them from harm. This is a sign of the weakness of their faith. The source of all things which occur is Allah, the Exalted, so Muslims should only obey Him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

"Whatever Allah grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter…"

It is important to note, that obeying a person which encourages the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in reality is obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…”

Times of Grief

During the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab, Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with them, died. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and the people mourned for him a great deal. He commented that the people should be allowed to weep for him, so long as they are not babbling (engaging in sinful speech). He concluded by saying that for the likes of Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, the weepers should weep. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 116-117.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show

mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. They are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another…”

Expedition Against the Persians

Guiding Others

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, the expedition against the Persians was in full swing. After his death, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, continued the campaign and urged the people to voluntarily join the expedition. Abu Ubayd Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah have mercy on him, was the first to respond and as a result many people followed his lead and signed up for the expedition. As his response led others to respond, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, appointed him the leader of the army, even though he was not a Companion, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 119-120.

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 are 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.

Advice to a General

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched an army to Iraq to continue fighting the Persians, he gave the following advice to his general, Abu Ubayd Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah have mercy on him. This has been recorded Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 120-121.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him to listen and pay heed to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were going with him.

Muslims should only consult a few people in respect to their affairs. 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 consult those who possess knowledge about it and the Islamic teachings linked to them.

In addition, a Muslim should only consult 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…"

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him to not rush into decisions as a war cannot be correctly fought unless one takes their time in making decisions and knows the right time to act.

Generally speaking, this advice indicates the importance of thinking things through.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only precedes when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a Muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, warned him that he was going to a land full of treachery, betrayal and oppression. Where most of the people were bold in committing evil and had forgotten good.

This reminds Muslims to 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

solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself 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.

Second Chances

During his Caliphate, Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not allow those who repented from apostatizing to join Muslim expeditions, as he feared they may be tempted into apostatizing again. This would have been disastrous for the Muslim soldiers who were engaging with super powers in foreign lands. But after much time passed while those who repented from apostatizing remained firm on Islam, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, allowed them to join the Muslim expeditions but he did not appoint them to positions of leadership. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 121 & 157-158.

Generally speaking, all Muslims 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."

Slaves of the World

During the expedition to Iraq, the Persian army encouraged the leaders of the people who lived in the territories which the Muslims had conquered, to revolt, even though they had signed peace treaties with the Muslims. They gave them empty promises for worldly things, such as wealth and power, thereby enticing them to revolt against the Muslims. This led to the battle of An Namariq. A battle which the Muslims ultimately won. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 122-123.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives..."

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the

thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Fulfilling Promises

After gaining victory in a battle against the Persians, one of their leaders was caught by the Muslim army. The soldier who apprehended him was not aware of who he was and was tricked into releasing him for a ransom. Before he could escape the Persian leader was apprehended and brought to the leader of the Muslim army, Abu Ubayd Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah have mercy on him. But as the Muslim soldier promised to release the Persian leader, Abu Ubayd, may Allah have mercy on him, did not desire to break his promise and so set the Persian leader free. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 123.

Umar Ibn Khattab, gave the same order to his general Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, when he dispatched him to Iraq. Meaning, he told him to grant security to any enemy soldier who a Muslim soldier granted security to, even if it was by mistake. He added that fulfilling promises is a means of achieving victory, while breaking promises leads to defeat. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 162.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that breaking promises is an aspect of hypocrisy.

The greatest of promises a Muslim has made is with Allah, the Exalted, which is to obey Him sincerely. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. 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?

A Powerful Advice

Umar Ibn Khattab appointed Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, as the commander of the expedition to Iraq. Before he dispatched him from Medina, he gave him the following advice which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 146-148.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him that there was no relationship between Allah, the Exalted, and anyone except through sincere obedience to Him. The people, noble or ignoble alike, were all equal before Allah, the Exalted. And the people would only obtain what is with Him by means of obedience.

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

The first thing to note is that a Muslim should always correct their intention when performing any deed as Allah, the Exalted, will only reward them when they perform righteous deeds for His sake. Those who perform deeds for the sake of other people and things will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on Judgment Day, which

will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that he must follow the way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, strictly, for it is the proper way. And he warned him that if he ignored his advice then he would be from amongst the losers.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

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

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

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

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path

of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that the expedition to Iraq was a difficultly and nothing could save him from it except adhering to the truth.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discussed the importance of truthfulness and avoiding lies. The first part advises that truthfulness leads to righteousness which in turn leads to Paradise.

When a person persists on truthfulness they are recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person.

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him to accustom himself to doing good and urge those with him to do the same.

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

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

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

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah,

number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

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

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

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim’s duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

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

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

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

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that the fear of Allah, the Exalted, was a combination of two things: obeying Him and avoiding disobedience.

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

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

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is

to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that the fear of Allah, the Exalted, was a combination of two things: obeying Him and avoiding disobedience. Those who obey Him, do so by disliking the material world and loving the hereafter. And those who disobey Him, do so by loving this world and disliking the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the

unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that a sign of faith is that the one who criticizes him and praises him on the basis of truth should be the same to him.

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 it 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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him that when Allah, the Exalted, loves a person, He makes others love him too. And when He hates a person, He makes others hate him too. He concluded that he should check his status before Allah, the Exalted, by checking his status with the people who are with him.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves the servant who possesses the following characteristics. The first characteristic is piety. This means they strive to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they fulfill their duties towards people, such as striving in this world in order to obtain their necessities and the necessities of their dependents without waste, excessiveness or extravagance.

The next characteristic mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is being independent of the creation. This means that a Muslim should fully utilize the means they have been provided by Allah, the Exalted, such as their physical strength in order to fulfill their duties. They should not behave lazily and seek things from people as this habit leads to dependence on them and reduces trusting 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 their efforts and trust that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them what is best for them.

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. As this can lead to many sins, such as showing off, and this only destroys 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 become famous 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.

A Beautiful Sermon – 5

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would give elegant, precise and useful sermons to the public, urging them towards success and peace in both worlds. After dispatching Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas to Iraq, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, gave the following sermon, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 149-150.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that whoever knows something should strive to benefit from it.

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

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised them to learn lessons by remembering death, by thinking about the dead and preparing for death by sending forward good deeds.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely, fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised them that if a person is not content with the basic necessities, nothing will make them feel independent of means.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2305, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the richest person is the one who is satisfied with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. The one who is always in need of more worldly things is needy, which is another word for poor, even if they possess much wealth. But the one who is pleased with what they possess is not needy and is therefore rich even if they possess little wealth or worldly things.

In addition, the one who is pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has granted them will be provided with grace which will ensure their possessions fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents and it will grant them peace of mind and body. Whereas, those who are not pleased will not obtain this grace which will cause them to feel as if their possessions are not enough to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind and body.

Satisfaction includes being pleased with what Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for a person namely, destiny. A Muslim should firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for His servant even if they do not observe the wisdom behind the choice. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

If a Muslim concentrates on obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as patience in times of difficulty and gratitude in times of ease, they will be provided with peace of mind.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised them that a person should bring any complaints they had to him. If they could not do that they should bring the complaint to anyone who could convey it to him and he would restore their rights.

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. 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 themself 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. This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which 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.[1] 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 which has been advised in

a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. 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.

Thinking About Others

Before Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with him, reached Iraq, the great general Al Muthanna Ibn Haritha, may Allah be pleased with him, died from the extensive wounds he received from his previous battles. Even on his death bed his concern was for the safety of the Muslim soldiers as he left some tactical advice for Sa'd, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 150-151.

This is an aspect of being sincere to others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory

prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

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

A Wise Advice

Umar Ibn Khattab eventually gave the command to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, to set out towards Iraq from where he was encamped, on the border of the Islamic empire. He also sent him the following advice, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 152-155.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him and the soldiers with him to constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, for it is the best weapon against the enemy and strongest weapon in war.

The one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will have His company. The one who has His company cannot lose in this world or the next. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 128:

"Indeed, Allāh is with those who fear Him…"

Piety/Fearing Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one can fulfill the commands of Allah,

the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…"

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon, advised that a Muslim cannot become pious until they avoid something which is not harmful to their religion out of caution that it will lead to something which is harmful. Therefore, an aspect of piety is to avoid things which are doubtful not just unlawful. This is because doubtful things takes a Muslim one step closer to the unlawful and the closer one is to the unlawful the easier it is to fall into it. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205, advises that the one who avoids unlawful and doubtful things will protect their religion and honor. If one observes those who have become misguided in society, in most cases, this occurred gradually not in one sudden step. Meaning, the person first indulged in doubtful things before falling into the unlawful. This is the reason why Islam stresses the need to avoid unnecessary and vain things in one's life as they can lead them to the unlawful. For example, vain and useless speech which is not classified sinful by Islam often leads to evil speech, such as backbiting, lying and slander. If a person avoids the first step by not indulging in vain speech they will undoubtedly avoid evil speech. This process can be applied to all things which are vain, unnecessary and especially, doubtful.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him and the soldiers with him to be more cautious in avoiding sins than in avoiding the enemy, for the sins of the army are to be feared more than their enemy. The Muslims are supported by their enemy's disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted; were it not for that, they would not have any strength, for the Muslim's numbers are not like theirs and the Muslim's weapons are not like theirs. If the two sides were equally matched in sin, they would have an advantage over the Muslims in strength. If the Muslims did not have an advantage over them by virtue, then the Muslims would not be able to defeat them by their strength. He reminded him that there are protectors from Allah, the Exalted, over each person who know what they are doing (the recording Angels), therefore each person must feel shy before them and refrain from acts of disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. He should not say that the enemy is worse than the Muslims and will therefore never prevail over the Muslims, even if they commit sins. A people may be defeated by others who are worse than them, just as the children of Israel were defeated by the polytheists when they did deeds that angered Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 5:

"…and they probed [even] into the homes, and it was a promise fulfilled."

Generally speaking, sins have been classified as minor and major. Over time many definitions have been given regarding what exactly a major sin is. One simple classification is that any sin which Islam has commanded the Islamic government to punish is classed as a major sin. Another classification is that if any sin is mentioned with Hellfire, the anger of Allah, the Exalted, or the curse of Allah, the Exalted, then it is a major sin. For example, backbiting is a major sin as it is cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer."

Some Muslims believe there are only seven major sins which have been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2766. But they fail to realize that even though these seven are major sins it does not mean that they are only seven. In fact, there are other Hadiths which mention other major sins such as, disobeying parents. This Hadith is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. The seven major sins declared in the Hadith quoted earlier are: polytheism, magic, killing an innocent, dealing with financial interest, usurping the wealth of orphans, fleeing a battlefield and accusing an innocent woman of fornication.

It is important to note, that when one persists on minor sins they become major in the sight of Islam.

Major sins are only forgiven with sincere repentance whereas minor sins can be erased by avoiding the major sins and performing righteous deeds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 31:

"If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins…"

Sincere repentance includes regret, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise 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.

Muslims should ensure they avoid all types of sins irrespective of size as one of the traps of the Devil is that he inspires Muslims to disregard small sins. One should always remember that mountains are made up of small stones.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him to be kind to the Muslim soldiers during their journeys and that they should not be exhausted lest they reach their enemy weakened from their journey, for their enemy has not been travelling and have strong horses and riders.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…”

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised him not to annoy any of the townspeople for they were protected through their treaties with the Muslims.

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 verbal and physical sins 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 which 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 taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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 will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. 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.

Spiritual Advice

Umar Ibn Khattab once wrote to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, during his expedition to Iraq and gave him the following advice, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 160.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded him to pay attention to his spiritual heart.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that if one's spiritual heart is sound the whole body will become sound but if their spiritual heart is corrupt then the whole body will become corrupt.

First of all, this Hadith refutes the foolish belief where one claims to have a purified heart even though their speech and actions are bad. This is because what is inside will eventually manifest outwardly.

The purification of the spiritual heart is only possible when one eliminates evil characteristics from themself and replaces them with good

characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings. This is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they can sincerely fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner will lead to a purified spiritual heart. This purification will then reflect in the outward limbs of the body, such as one's tongue and eyes. Meaning, they will only use their organs in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is in fact a sign showing the love Allah, the Exalted, has for His righteous servant according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502.

It is important to note, that this purification will guide one through all worldly difficulties successfully so that they achieve both worldly and religious success.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him to advise his soldiers and remind them of the importance of good intentions and checking on themselves. The help of Allah, the Exalted, comes according to one’s good intentions.

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

It is important to understand that the foundation of all deeds and even Islam itself is one's intention. It is the very thing which Allah, the Exalted, judges people on according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. A Muslim should ensure they perform all religious and useful worldly actions for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they gain reward from Him in both worlds. A sign of this correct mentality is that this person neither expects nor desires people to appreciate or show gratitude to them for the deeds they perform. If one desires this then it indicates their incorrect intention.

In addition, acting with the correct intention prevents sadness and bitterness as the one who acts for the sake of people will eventually encounter ungrateful people who will make them annoyed and bitter as they feel they wasted their effort and time. Unfortunately, this is seen in parents and relatives as they often fulfill their duties towards their children and relatives for their sake instead of for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. But the one who acts for the sake of Allah, the exalted, will fulfill all their duties towards others such as their children and never become bitter or enraged when they fail to show gratitude towards them. This attitude leads to peace of mind and general happiness as they know Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their righteous deed and will reward them for it. This is the way all Muslims must act otherwise they may well be left empty handed on the Day of Judgment.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded him to always place his hope in none other than Allah, the Exalted.

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

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

Muslims must therefore learn the key difference so that they can abandon wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in Allah, the Exalted, which

always leads to nothing except good and success in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7405.

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

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

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

A Call to Faith

Umar Ibn Khattab commanded his general during the Iraq expedition, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, to send a delegation of wise Muslims to the king of Persia in order to invite him towards Islam. Even though the king was rude and harsh with them yet they maintained good manners and gentleness throughout their conversation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 163-167.

The beauty of Islam is found in gentleness. This has been advised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3689. The Holy Quran even mentions that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, constantly lovingly accompanied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, because of his gentleness and soft nature. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 159:

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

The Arabs were infamous for being harsh hearted but due to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's, peace and blessings be upon him, soft

temperament their tough hearts melted and thus they adopted this quality and became beacons to guide the rest of mankind. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4809, that the one who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

"…And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers…"

This is a clear message to those who desire to spread the word of Islam. They must possess a gentle constructive mind set rather than a harsh destructive one. They should unite people and strive to benefit others rather than spreading controversy within society. A good example of this is seen in one's attitude towards their children. The parents that showed a gentle nature towards their children had a greater positive impact on them than the parents who adopted a harsh temperament. Often some push people further away from Islam with their harsh attitude and this completely challenges the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, once an uneducated Bedouin urinated in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, desired to punish him the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade them and gently explained to the Bedouin the etiquettes of being in a Mosque. This incident is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 529. This soft approach affected the man in a positive way.

This important characteristic is also mentioned in many places of the Holy Quran. For example, even though Pharaoh claimed to be the highest Lord yet Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them both, to invite Pharaoh towards guidance using gentle and kind speech. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 24:

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

and Chapter 20 Taha, verses 43-44:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."

Children and even animals understand the language of gentleness. So how can an adult not be guided correctly if one adopts this characteristic when inviting them towards Islam and good? This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6601, that Allah, the Exalted, is kind and gentle according to His infinite dignity and likes the creation to act softly with each other. Unfortunately, many who spread the word of Islam have adopted the incorrect belief that being gentle is a sign of weakness. This is nothing but a ploy of the Devil as he desires to lead mankind away from Islam.

Empowerment

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, detached a Muslim army to Iraq and appointed Sariyah, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge. This army was engaged in a battle in Iraq, while Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was delivering a sermon in Medina. During his sermon he shouted out the words, “O Sariyah, move to the mountain!” three times. After a long time passed a messenger came from the army of Sariyah, may Allah be pleased with him, and told the people of Medina that during the battle they were being defeated until they heard the voice of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, telling them to move to the mountain. When they followed his instructions they overcame the enemy. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti’s, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Pages 127-128.

The fact that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, saw what was occurring many miles away and that his voice reached the army was a miracle from Allah, the Exalted. This empowerment is only possible when one adheres strictly to following and obeying the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In a divine Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502, Allah, the Exalted, declares that when one strives in fulfilling the obligatory duties and performing voluntary righteous deeds He blesses their five senses so that they use them in obedience to Him. This righteous servant will very rarely

commit sins. This increase in guidance has been indicated in Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

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

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

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

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

Battle of Qadisiyyah

Remaining Firm

Allah, the Exalted, granted victory to the Muslims during the main battle against the Persians: the Battle of Al Qadisiyyah. The Muslims were outnumbered four to one and possessed less resources yet under the leadership of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with him, they remained firm against the enemy until they were granted victory. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 200.

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

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving

others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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

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

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from

this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

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

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

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their

heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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

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

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

Truly Rich

After the victory in the Battle of Al Qadisiyyah, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah pleased with him, gave the following sermon, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 203.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people that he was keen not to leave any of their needs without fulfilling it. He desired for everyone to be equal and for everyone to have enough to survive. He reminded them that he was not a king who enslaves people, rather he was the slave of Allah, the Exalted, who had been given a trust. He declared that if he kept away from the public wealth and spent it on the people, then he would be blessed. But if he kept the wealth for himself, then he would have a short-lived joy which would be followed by a long doom.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of sharing the worldly things one is in charge of with others.

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

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter, or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day as they will be held accountable and even punished over them.

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

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

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

The truly rich person is the one who uses their wealth correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. And this attitude is not dependent of having much wealth. Any amount of wealth used correctly will cause one to become rich even if they possess little wealth. In reality, this person takes their wealth with them to the hereafter and this attitude provides them free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds which only increases their richness in the hereafter.

Following the Truth

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once reminded the people that whoever acts on their whims and desires, will lose out and harm only themself. But whoever follows the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adheres to the laws and follows the right path, seeking that which is with Allah, the Exalted, has done good and will be victorious. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 203-204.

This advice encourages one to firmly obey and follow the two sources of guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

No Concessions

Umar Ibn Khattab wrote a letter to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 205.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him that Allah, the Exalted, has allowed concessions in certain situations except in two things: Justice and the Remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. There is no concession for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, and He accepts nothing but a great deal of it.

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

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

This is achieved by practically acting on the three levels of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. The first level is to remember Allah, the Exalted, internally and silently. This includes correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The second is by remembering Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue. But the highest and most effective way of strengthening one's bond with Allah, the Exalted, is practically remembering Him with one's limbs. This is achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge which in turn is the root of all good and success in both worlds.

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

These stages are the key to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, advised him that Allah, the Exalted, has allowed concessions in certain situations except in two things: Justice and the Remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. There is no concession for justice, whether during times of ease or hardship. Even if justice appears soft, it is still stronger than injustice and is more able to eliminate falsehood than injustice.

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. 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 themself 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.

This will be a major cause of people entering Hell which 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.[1] 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 which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. 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.

Overlooking Faults

During the expedition to Iraq, many of the cities which initially fell into Muslim control rebelled against the Muslims, even though they signed agreements of peace with them, until the decisive Battle of Al Qadisiyyah, which allowed the Muslims to retake these cities. Umar Ibn Khattab, commanded Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with them, to either forgive the people who rebelled against the Muslim authority, if he was convinced of their remorse, or grant them safe passage to a safe place, if he distrusted them for any reason. But he did not allow anyone to take revenge against them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 205.

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.

Finally, 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 and peace of mind in both worlds.

Leading with Truthfulness

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was sent the large amounts of war booty obtained from the Iraq expedition he commented that the people that sent this to him were honest, meaning, if they were dishonest they would have kept it. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that as he was honest, the people were honest and had he been dishonest then the people would have been dishonest. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 223.

It is important for all Muslims, especially parents, to act on what they advise to others. It is obvious if one turns the pages of history that those who acted on what they preached had a much more positive effect on others compared to those who did not lead by example. The best example being the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who not only practiced what he preached but adhered to those teachings more strictly than anyone else. Only with this attitude will Muslims especially, parents have a positive impact on others. For example, if a mother warns her children not to lie as it is a sin but often lies in front of them her children are unlikely to act on her advice. A person's actions will always have more of an impact on others than their speech. It is important to note that this does not mean one needs to be perfect before advising others. It means they should sincerely strive to act on their own advice before advising others. The Holy Quran has made it clear in the following verse that Allah, the exalted, hates this behaviour. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that the a person who commanded good but

refrained from it themself and prohibited evil yet acted on it themself will be punished in severely Hell. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

So it is vital for all Muslims to strive to act on their advice themself then advise others to do the same. Leading by example is the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and is the best way to affect others in a positive way.

Simplicity

After an important victory in Iraq, the head of the Persian army, Al Hormuzan, surrendered himself on the condition he would be taken to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. When they reached Medina, Al Hormuzan was given his usual expensive clothes and crown to wear so that the people could see him in his usual state. When they entered Medina they found Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, sleeping on the floor of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Al Hormuzan was shocked when he observed that he was not surrounded by any guards or gatekeepers and lived a simple life. After Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, woke up and observed Al Hormuzan, he commented that the people must follow the guidance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and must not be deceived by this material world, as it is all deceit. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 228-232.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that simplicity is a part of faith.

Islam does not teach Muslims to give up all their wealth and lawful desires but it instead teaches them to adopt a simple lifestyle in all aspects of their life, such as their food, clothing, housing and business, so that it provides them free time to prepare for the hereafter adequately. This involves

fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This simple life includes striving in this world in order to fulfill one’s needs and the needs of their dependents without excessiveness, waste or extravagance.

A Muslim should understand that the simpler life they lead the less they will stress over worldly things and therefore the more they will be able to strive for the hereafter thereby, obtaining peace of mind, body and soul. But the more complicated a person's life is the more they will stress, encounter difficulties and strive less for their hereafter as their preoccupations with worldly things will never seem to end. This attitude will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, body and soul.

Simplicity leads to a life of ease in this world and a straight forward accounting on the Day of Judgment. Whereas, a complicated and indulgent life will only lead to a stressful life and a severe and difficult accounting on the Day of Judgment.

Avoiding Treachery

During the expedition to Iraq, the conquest of Jundaisaboor took place. After some fighting, the Muslims were surprised to observe the gates of the city being opened and the common people leaving for their everyday activities, such as grazing their sheep. When they were questioned about their actions, they told the Muslims that they received a treaty of peace from the Muslims and they agreed to it. The Muslim leader sent no such treaty but after enquiring from his soldiers, they found that one of them, who was a slave from Jundaisaboor, sent a peace treaty to them. The people of Jundaisaboor stressed that they received a treaty from the Muslims and accepted it and therefore the Muslims were duty-bound to uphold it. The Muslim leader wrote to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, about what occurred and he commanded them to accept the treaty as a person would not be sincere if they did not fulfill their covenants. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 233-234.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

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 the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. 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.

The Test of Success

After the Persian empire was conquered, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was sent a huge amount of wealth from the spoils of war including the personal belongings of the king of Persia, Chosroes. After observing it he commented that Allah, the Exalted, had withheld this type of worldly success and gain from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, even though they were both more dearer to Allah, the Exalted, than him. He then sought refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from this being a test for him. He wept profusely and commanded for the spoils to be distributed to the poor. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 234.

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

It is important to understand that this does not only apply to wealth. But this warning applies to all aspects of people's worldly desires which can be encompassed by the desire for fame, wealth, authority and the social aspects of one's life, such as family, friends and a career. Whenever one aims to fulfil their desires by pursuing these things, even if they are lawful,

beyond their needs it will distract them from preparing for the hereafter. It will lead them to bad character such as being wasteful and extravagant and may even take them towards sins in order to obtain these things. Failing to obtain them may lead to impatience and other acts of defiance and disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted. It is obvious these desires have taken control over many Muslims as they would happily get up in the middle of the night in order to obtain these things such as wealth or go on a holiday but will fail to do so when advised to offer the voluntary night prayer or attend the morning obligatory prayer at the Mosque with congregation.

There is no harm in obtaining these things as long as they are lawful and required in order to fulfil a person's needs and the needs of their dependents. But when a person goes beyond this then they will become preoccupied with them at the loss of their hereafter as the more one pursues their desires the less they will strive in preparing for the hereafter. And therefore, the warning given in this Hadith will apply to them.

Tests through Ease

After the Persian empire was conquered, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the Muslims that Allah, the Exalted, granted the land, homes and wealth of the Persians to them, to see what they would do with it. Therefore, they must adhere to His commands and then He will fulfill His covenant with them. He warned them not to change otherwise Allah, the Exalted, would replace them with another people. He feared that if anything bad happened to the Muslim nation, it will be because the Muslims changed. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 251-252.

Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease then times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs.

Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

Following Desires

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once entered upon one of his sons eating meat. When he questioned him about it the son replied that he was craving it so he bought it for himself. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, then commented that it was sufficient extravagance for a person to eat everything they had a desire for. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 132.

Even though Islam permits one to fulfil lawful desires yet this incident indicates the importance of not persisting on this attitude as it often leads to sins.

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

Similarly, when one excessively indulges in unnecessary lawful things they move that much closer to the things which are unlawful such as, wasting

wealth. And with the passing of time the unlawful things which seemed unimaginable for them to commit becomes a normal thing in their eyes. Then it is only a matter of time until they too commit those unlawful things.

This is the reason why it is important for Muslims to be on guard against over indulging in things which are unnecessary even if they are lawful as this attitude will protect their faith and honour in the long run which the Hadith quoted earlier declares.

Agree to Disagree

Umar Ibn Khattab and Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, were once seen having an argument over a particular issue until an onlooker commented that they would never reach an agreement. Yet the two only separated on the best and most beautiful of terms. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 150.

They behaved in this manner as they only cared about submitting to the truth. When one behaves in this manner they do not carry ill feelings in their heart for anyone else.

In addition, one can adopt this attitude by learning to agree to disagree with those they argue with.

As all people have not been created the same they are bound to disagree on certain things. In matters related to religion and those which differentiate between lawful and unlawful things a Muslim must remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who challenges or disagrees with them. But in matters where the choice is between to lawful worldly options a Muslim is entitled to offer their opinion to others when they are requested to. But they should not waste their time nor stress if others disagree with their opinion. When one holds onto these disagreements over time they can cause enmity to build up between people

which can lead to fractured and broken relationships. This can even result in the sin of severing ties with people. So in cases like this it is important for Muslims to let things go and not harbour a negative feeling towards someone who disagrees with their opinion and choice. They should instead push themself to agree to disagree and move on from the situation without any ill feelings. The one who fails to do this will find themself always arguing and possessing enmity for others as they are bound to disagree with others on certain topics and issues due to a difference in their characteristics and mentality. Understanding and acting on this advice is a branch of finding peace in this world.

Importance of Practicing Faith

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was once seen picking up a straw and commenting that he wished he was that straw, he wished that he was nothing and he wished that his mother never gave birth to him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 133.

This indicates the deep fear of Allah, the Exalted, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed. An aspect of this fear was his understanding that if he failed to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, he would not succeed in this world or in the next.

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

Some people claim that their belief and obedience to their God is in their hearts and they therefore do not need to demonstrate it practically. Unfortunately, this foolish mentality has infected many Muslims who believe they possess a pure faithful heart even though they fail to fulfil the obligatory duties of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has clearly declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, that when one's heart is pure the body becomes pure which means their actions become correct. But if one's heart is corrupt the body becomes corrupt which means their actions will be corrupt and incorrect. Therefore, the one who does not obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling their duties practically can never have a pure heart.

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

A Sincere Leader

A relative of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once asked him to give him wealth from the public treasury. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized him and commented that did he desire for him to meet Allah, the Exalted, while he was a treacherous king. Then Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gave him wealth from his own property. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 133.

On another occasion Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, asked the people around him whether he was a king or a Caliph and if he was a king then it was a great matter (against him). Someone commented that there was a difference between the two. A Caliph only takes from people what is due (by Islamic law) and he only uses this in the right way, which Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did. Whereas, a king treats people unjustly and wrongfully takes the possessions of the people and uses it incorrectly. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell silent when he heard this. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 144.

It is a shame how things have changed so much since the day of the righteous predecessors. In those days, when they became leaders they in fact became the servants of the people and instead of spending the people's money on their own personal things they would spend their own personal money on the people. Whereas, nowadays the leaders and royal families instead spend the wealth of the people and behave as if they are the masters of the nation.

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

Controlling Anger

Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that whenever he saw his father, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, become angry he would control himself and refrain from acting on his anger whenever Allah, the Exalted, was mentioned to him or when a verse of the Holy Quran was recited to him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 133.

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 for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. 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 themself 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 themself 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 and 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.

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.

Expedition Against the Romans

An Honest Description

The expedition to Syria continued throughout the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah pleased with him. After the death of Abu Bakkar Siddique, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, wrote to Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, appointing him as the leader of the Syria expedition. He also mentioned some truthful characteristics of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, which are important to know and emulate. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 269-270.

Umar described Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, as the one who acted in accordance with the truth.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Umar also described Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, as the enjoiner of good.

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 their 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 effected 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 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. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Umar also described Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, as a gentle, easy-going and friendly person.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…”

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Umar also described Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with them, as a wise person.

Wisdom encourages one to use their knowledge correctly so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds.

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

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings

without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

Advice to a Leader

During the expedition to Syria, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah and Mu'adh Bin Jabal wrote a letter to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 270.

They advised Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that now that he became the Caliph, enemies, friends, noble and ignoble, strong and weak would come to him. All of them would have some rights over him and he should be careful in fulfilling them.

This is achieved by adopting sincerity to others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

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

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a Muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they

can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

They also advised Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to constantly remember and therefore prepare for the Day of Judgement. The Day on which all the secrets in the people's hearts will be revealed and all concealed matters will come to light and all the people will be subjugated to the Sovereign, the Subduer, Who will subdue them by His might. The people will submit themselves, awaiting His judgement, fearing His punishment and hoping for His mercy.

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, Muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

"O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life…"

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

Importance of Perception

During the expedition to Syria, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah was appointed in charge by Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. When this news reached him, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that he did not seek power in this world and it is not worldly gain he sought. He added, that what people see in this world will soon come to an end and cease to be. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 271.

Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, always acted to please Allah, the Exalted, and to obtain the good home of the hereafter. This mindset is obtained when one adopts the correct understanding and perception in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

It is important for Muslims to develop the correct perception so that they can increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is what the righteous predecessors possessed and it encouraged them to avoid the excess luxuries of the material world and instead prepare for the hereafter. This is an important characteristic to possess and it can be explained with a worldly example. Two people are extremely thirsty and come across a cup of murky water. They both desire to drink it even though it is not pure and even if it means they have to argue over it. As their thirst grows the more focused on the cup of murky water they become to the point they lose focus on everything else. But if one of them shifted their focus and observed a river of pure water which was only a short distance ahead they would

immediately lose focus on the cup of water to the point they would no longer care about it and no longer argue over it. And instead they would endure their thirst patiently knowing a river of pure water is close. The person who is unaware of the river would probably believe the other person is crazy after observing their change in attitude. This is the case of the two types of people in this world. One group greedily focuses on the material world. The other group has shifted their focus to the hereafter and the pure and eternal blessings therein. When one shifts their focus to the bliss of the hereafter worldly problems do not seem like such a big deal. Therefore, patience becomes easier to adopt. But if one keeps their focus on this world then it will seem like everything to them. They will argue, fight, love and hate for it. Just like the person in the example mentioned earlier who only focuses on the cup of murky water.

This correct perception is only achieved through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

Eliminating Envy

During the expedition to Syria, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah was appointed in charge by Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, and therefore replaced Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him. Khalid, may Allah be pleased with him, had no issues with being replaced but as a reminder to those listening, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that they were all brothers carrying out the command of Allah, the Exalted. And if a Muslim's brother is appointed over him, it will not harm his spiritual or worldly affairs, rather it is more likely that the one who is in charge is closer to temptation or more likely to fall into sin because of what he is exposed to, except those who are protected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 271.

Generally speaking, it is obvious that envy has affected many Muslims. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned this would occur in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2510. It leads to many other negative characteristics and problems. For example, it prevents Muslims from fulfilling the important duty of supporting good irrespective of who does it as the jealous person does not desire to aid others as they believe the other person's rank in society will increase beyond their own.

A Muslim must take steps to remove jealousy from their character. One thing which can aid in this goal is to become content with what a person

possesses. Allah, the Exalted, does not give people according to their desires as this might lead to their destruction. He instead gives what is best for each person's faith. Understanding this can eliminate jealousy over what others possess. How many Muslims obtained wealth which destroyed their faith? And how many Muslims will be forgiven on Judgment Day because of the tests they endured patiently? 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."

The other thing to understand it that as this material world is limited it is easy to become jealous over the things within it. But if a Muslim aims for the hereafter and prioritises it over the excess of this material world it would remove jealously from them. This is because the blessings of the hereafter are unlimited therefore, there is no need to be jealous as there are plenty of blessings to go around in fact, they will never end. But the more one aims and desires the limited things found within the world the more jealous they will become.

Honour and Humiliation

During the expedition to Syria, a Muslim army besieged Jerusalem until its people agreed to hand the control of the city to the Muslims on the condition that the Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, come in person to them. He agreed and after a long journey reached Jerusalem. When he was close to Jerusalem he met his generals and was advised by Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, to wear fine clothes and ride a ceremonial horse. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, rebuked him and reminded them that they were the most humiliated people on Earth and Allah, the Exalted, honoured them with His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And if they sought honour in anything else, Allah, the Exalted, would humiliate them. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Numbers 69-70.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a day would soon come when other nations would attack the Muslim nation and even though they would be great in number they would be deemed insignificant by the world. Allah, the Exalted, would remove the fear of Muslims from the hearts' of the other nations. This would occur because of the Muslim nation's love for the material world and their hatred for death.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were small in number yet, they overcame entire nations whereas the Muslims today are greater in

number yet, have no social or political influence in the world. This is because the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, lived their lives according to the teachings of Islam thereby, favouring and preparing for the hereafter over enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whereas, most of the Muslims today have adopted the opposite mind-set. It is important to understand that the root of all sins is the love of the material world. This is because any sin which is committed is done out of love and desire for it. The material world can be split into four aspects: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their relatives and friends. It is in the excess pursuit of these things which lead to sins, such as earning unlawful wealth out of love for fortune. It is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, warns that love for wealth and authority is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction two hungry wolves would cause if they were let loose on a herd of sheep. Whenever people seek the excess of these aspects of the material world it always leads to disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. When this occurs the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed which leads to nothing but trouble.

Even though, some Muslims believe pursuing the excess things of the material world is harmless it is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3158. He warned that he did not fear poverty for Muslims. What he feared was that Muslims would pursue the excess of this material world, such as excess wealth, and this would cause them to compete with each other over it and this would lead to their destruction. As warned in this Hadith this was the behaviour of the past nations.

As the material world is limited it is obvious that people would have to compete over it if they desired more than their necessities. This competition would cause them to adopt the characteristics which contradict the character of a true Muslim, such as envy and enmity for others. They would stop caring for each other as they are too busy competing in gathering and hoarding the material world. And they would contradict the advice given in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6011, which advises that Muslims should act like one body when any part of the body suffers from an illness the rest of the body shares in the pain. This competition would drive a Muslim to stop loving for others what they love for themself which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow Muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a Muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the Muslims today.

If Muslims desire to regain the strength and influence Islam once had they must strive and prioritise preparing for the hereafter over striving for obtaining and hoarding the excess of this material world. This must occur from an individual level until it affects the whole nation.

Superiority and Success

During the expedition to Syria, a Muslim army besieged Jerusalem until its people agreed to hand the control of the city to the Muslims on the condition that the Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, come in person to them. He agreed and after a long journey he reached Jerusalem where he drew up a peace treaty with the people of Jerusalem guaranteeing the people their physical and religious freedom as long as they paid the tax (Jizya). This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 295-296.

Even though the number of Muslims have increased over time it is obvious that the strength of Muslims has only decreased. Each Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith believes in the authenticity of the Holy Quran as doubting it would cause them to lose their faith. In the following verse Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to obtaining superiority and success which would remove the weakness and grief Muslims are experiencing all around the world. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

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

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Muslims only need to become true believers in order to achieve this superiority and success in both worlds. True belief involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and those towards people, such as loving for others what one loves for themself which has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. This requires one to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Through this attitude was success and superiority granted to the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. And if Muslims desire to achieve it then they must return to this rightly guided attitude. As Muslims believe in the Holy Quran they should understand this simple teaching and act on it.

A Traveller

During the expedition to Syria, a Muslim army besieged Jerusalem until its people agreed to hand the control of the city to the Muslims on the condition that the Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, come in person to them. He agreed and after a long journey he reached Jerusalem. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted on staying in his governor's home, Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had a habit of always checking on his governors to observe how they lived and behaved as leaders of society. When he entered his home he observed nothing except a sword, shield and a saddle. When he questioned his lifestyle, Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that whatever he possessed was enough to get him to his destination meaning, the hereafter. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, wept and commented that the world had changed all of them except him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 302-303.

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

This Hadith teaches Muslims to limit their hope for a long life which is the main cause of failing to prepare for the hereafter while dedicating one's complete effort to the material world as it convinces a Muslim they have plenty of time to prepare for the hereafter. In addition, a Muslim should not treat this temporary world as their permanent home. Instead, they should behave as someone who is about to depart it, never to return. This would inspire one to dedicate the majority of their efforts in preparing for their final destination namely, the hereafter, and to limit their efforts in obtaining the material world which is beyond their need and responsibilities. This concept has been discussed throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for example chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 39:

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

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

In addition, this Hadith mentions a rider and not someone who is walking. This is because a rider would rest significantly less than someone journeying on foot. This further indicates that a person's stay in this world is very short. This is quite evident to all. Even those who reach elderly age admit they life went by in a flash. So in reality, whether one reaches old age or not life is just a moment. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

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

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

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

"…indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah…"

This is when a Muslim fulfils the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. Other provisions, such as food, are required in order to complete the journey from the world to the hereafter. But the provision which should be prioritised is piety as it is the only provision which will benefit someone in both this world and the next. Whereas, all the other types of provision, such as food, wealth and housing, will only benefit someone in this world unless, it is dedicated towards the hereafter, such as donating charity, but this in fact is a part of piety.

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

The first state of being a stranger is someone who does not attach their heart and mind to their temporary home. Their only aim is to gather enough supplies so that they can return safely to their permanent home namely, the hereafter. This is like the one who lives in a foreign country on a work visa. Their place of work is not their home; only a place to earn money so that they can return back to their homeland with it. This person will never treat the strange country as their home. Instead, they only spend on necessary things and concentrate on saving their wealth so that they can take as much wealth as possible back to their real and permanent home. If this person spent all or the majority of their wealth in the foreign country and returned to their home country empty handed they would undoubtedly be considered blameworthy by their relatives. This is because they have failed in their mission and purpose of living in another country on a work visa. Similarly, a Muslim should dedicate the majority of their effort in acquiring provisions to take to the hereafter. They should not compete for the luxuries of the material world with others. Instead, they must concentrate on their mission to acquire provisions for the eternal hereafter. If they dedicate too much effort in beautifying their temporary home then they will enter the hereafter unprepared and empty handed and therefore, fail in their mission which Allah, the Exalted, entrusted them with. A Muslim should be honest with themself and reflect on how many hours of the day they dedicate each to the material world and preparing for the hereafter. This self-reflection will show them if they have the correct mentality or not and how strong their faith in the hereafter really is. Chapter 87 Al A'la, verses 16-17:

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent to mankind when they were the most lowly of people and the vast majority of them were leading a sinful life which would have caused them to enter Hell. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, called them towards the path of truth with clear proofs. Many of these people accepted his clear message and followed him. He promised them that Islam would conquer many nations and much wealth would be obtained by the Muslims. But he warned them not to become distracted by the luxuries of the material world. An example of this warning is mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3997. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that competing for the unnecessary luxuries of the material world would destroy people. Therefore, he advised Muslims to content themselves with the basic necessities in order to fulfil their responsibilities and needs and instead concentrate on preparing for the hereafter. Everything the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, promised Muslims came true. When the world was opened to the Muslims the majority of them became busy with competing, collecting, hoarding and enjoying the excess of the material world. Thus, they gave up preparing for the hereafter correctly as they were told to by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Only a few accepted his advice and only took what they needed from the material world in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities and dedicated the majority of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter. This small party, meaning the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the righteous predecessors, caught up with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter as they practically followed his advice and footsteps. On the other hand, the majority continued in their heedlessness chasing the material world until death caught them unprepared.

The second mentality Muslims should adopt as advised in the main Hadith under discussion is that of a traveller. This person does not observe this material world as their home and instead journeys towards their true home

meaning, the hereafter. This mentality is similar to a back packer who may sleep over in different cities but never regards them as their home. The only provision they take with them is what they can carry meaning, the essentials. This includes the things they need to survive and will help them reach their destination safely. A back packer would never pack unnecessary items knowing that these things will only be a burden for them. Nor will they fail to pack the essentials needed to complete their journey safely. Similarly, an intelligent Muslim only collects the deeds from this material world, in respect to actions and speech, which will help them reach the hereafter safely. They will turn away from all actions and speech which will become a burden for them in both this world and the next. This is the attitude the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to adopt in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4104. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 7-8:

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

A Muslim must understand that the day and night are only brief stages in which people travel through, stage by stage, until they reach the hereafter. Therefore, they should use each stage by sending ahead provision to the hereafter in the form of righteous deeds. They must constantly be aware the journey will end very soon and they will reach the hereafter. Even if the journey looks long it will ultimately feel like a moment so one should make it a moment of obedience before it ends while they are unprepared. Chapter 79 An Naziat, verse 46:

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

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

Muslims must realise that as they are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, soon a day will come when they will return to Him. When they return they will be stopped for questioning. Therefore, they should prepare something good for this interrogation. They should fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrain from His prohibitions and face destiny with patience. But if they continue in heedlessness and fail to prepare then they will be taken to task for what has already occurred and for what remains.

Moving on to the advice of the Companion Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion. The first part of it highlights the importance of shortening one's hope for a long life in this world. A Muslim should not believe they stay in this world is long as they could pass away at any moment. Even if one lives for many years life still seems to have gone by in a flash. This is what Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, indicated by advising Muslims not to believe they will be alive in the morning if they reach the evening. This mentality is the root cause of only taking what one needs from the material

world in order to fulfil their worldly responsibilities and prepare for the hereafter. Whereas, having hopes for a long life is the root cause of the opposite meaning, it causes one to delay preparing for the hereafter by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins and it encourages them to collect and hoard the material world believing their stay in it will be extremely long.

In addition, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised Muslims to make good use of their good health before they encounter sickness. Unfortunately, most people only appreciate the value of good health after they lose it, which has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6412. Making use of good health means that a Muslim should use their physical and mental strength in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by performing righteous deeds and refraining from sins before they reach a time when they might desire to perform good deeds but can no longer do them due to poor health. The one who makes good use of their good health will be given the reward of the righteous deeds they performed during their good health even when they encounter sickness and can no longer do them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2996. Whereas, the one who does not make good use of their good health will lose this potential reward when they become sick. In fact, they will be left with nothing except regret.

The final part of the advice given by Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, is that a person should make good use of their life before death. This includes making use of all things which lead to righteous deeds, such as wealth, and avoiding all those things which prevent one from doing good deeds, such as unnecessary preoccupations. It is important for Muslims to make good use of their time before they become distracted with

responsibilities which naturally occur with the passing of time, such as marriage. And to make good use of their wealth before their financial responsibilities increase.

As warned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2403, all people will have regrets at the time of their death. The good doer will regret that they did not perform more good deeds before dying. The sinful person will regret that they did not sincerely repent before their death. In this world people are often given second chances for example, redoing a driving test, but there is no do over once a person dies. Regret will not help them at all. Instead, it will only add to their pain and suffering. So Muslims must use the time they are given to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, before their moment ends by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. One should abandon the mentality of delaying things till tomorrow as in most cases this tomorrow never comes. A Muslim should concentrate on today and therefore, do the things which please Allah, the Exalted, as tomorrow may come in this world but they may not be alive to witness it.

The Sincere Soldiers

During the expedition to Syria, the Roman king, Heraclius retreated to Constantinople. There he questioned a man who had been a prisoner of one of the Muslim armies about the characteristics of the Muslims. This discussion has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 301.

The man described the Muslim soldiers as knights by day.

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

This does not necessarily refer to physical strength which one uses to perform righteous deeds. But it also refers to knowledge and acting on it. When one acts on their knowledge it leads to certainty of faith. The one who possesses strong faith will fulfil their duties according to their knowledge and not blind imitation like the weak believer. A weak believer believes something based on hearsay like if they were told a person is inside their house whereas the strong believer believes and acts based on knowledge for example, if they saw the person inside their house through a window. The stronger one's faith the greater their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His

prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This in turn increases their success in both worlds. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

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

The man also described the Muslim soldiers as monks by night.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themself out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

The man also described the Muslim soldiers as people who would never take anything unlawfully.

It is a major sin to utilise the unlawful. This includes using unlawful wealth, using items which are unlawful and eating unlawful foods. It is important to note, that the specific things which have been labelled unlawful by Islam such as alcohol are not the only things which are unlawful. In fact, even lawful things can become unlawful if they have been gained through unlawful things. For example, a lawful food can become unlawful if it is bought with unlawful wealth. Therefore, it is important for Muslims to ensure they only deal with lawful things as it only takes one element of the unlawful to ruin someone.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2346, that the one who utilises the unlawful will have all their supplications rejected. If their supplications are rejected by Allah, the Exalted, can one expect any of their

good deeds to be accepted? This in fact has been answered in another Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1410. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly warned that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the lawful. Therefore, any deed which has a foundation in the unlawful such as performing the Holy Pilgrimage with unlawful wealth will be rejected.

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3118, that this type of person will be sent to Hell on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

The man also described the Muslim soldiers as people who would spread the Islamic greeting of peace to others.

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.

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 the self and possessions of others. This is in fact, the definition of a true Muslim and believer according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998.

The man also described the Muslim soldiers as people who destroyed anyone who opposed them.

This reminds Muslims the importance of remaining steadfast whenever they are attacked by their enemies namely, the Devil, their inner Devil and those who invite them towards the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. A

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

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

Whereas facing these attacks with ignorance and disobedience will only lead one to difficulties and disgrace in both worlds. The same way a solider that possesses no weapons to defend themself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend themself 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.

After hearing their description, Heraclius commented that if the Muslim soldiers were as the man said, then they would conquer the land beneath his feet.

Financial Dealings

Abu Ubaida Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, initially had control over Homs, a city in Syria. But when word came that the Romans were attempting to retake Homs, due to a tactical advantage he decided to withdraw from the city. He ordered for the tax (Jizya) which had been collected from its citizens to be returned to them, as this tax is only taken when the Muslim rule continues in a land. The people were shocked at their conduct as they were use to the Romans taking all their possessions from them. The people prayed for the Muslims to achieve victory so that they would return and once again control Homs. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 305-306.

Generally speaking, this incident indicates the importance of fulfilling one's agreements, especially financial ones.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that merchants will be raised as immoral people on Judgment Day except those who fear Allah, the Exalted, act righteously and speak the truth.

This Hadith applies to all those who take part in business transactions. It is extremely important to fear Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands,

refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes treating others kindly according to the teachings of Islam. In respect to business dealings a Muslim should be honest in their speech by disclosing all the details of the transaction to all who are involved. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079, warns that when Muslims hide things in financial transactions, such as defects in their goods, it will lead to a loss in blessings.

Acting righteously includes not striving to con others by making them pay excessively for goods. A Muslim should simply treat others how they desire to be treated meaning, with honesty and full disclosure. The same way, a Muslim would not like to be mistreated in financial matters they should not mistreat others.

Those conducting business should always avoid lying as it leads to immorality and immortality leads to Hell. In fact, a person will keep telling and acting on lies until they are recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971.

Expedition to Egypt

Fixing Not Corrupting

Umar Ibn Khattab, decided to send Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with them, towards Egypt, which was controlled by the Romans. When he conquered one of its cities, Al Farma, he reminded his soldiers that the people of Egypt should know that they are troops of peace and they should not cause any corruption in the land. Instead, they should correct its affairs and set a good example from the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 312-313.

Corruption is when a person abuses the blessings they possess, especially their social influence, in order to gain worldly things, such as power and wealth. It affects a Muslim's duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and leads to much sins against people, such as oppression.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, warns that when the general public cheats each other financially Allah, the Exalted, punishes them by appointing oppressive leaders over them. One aspect of this oppression is corruption which causes the general public great distress.

The same Hadith warns that when the general public break their covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then they will be overpowered by their enemies who will illegally confiscate their wealth and property from them. Again, this is an aspect of corruption where people of influence, such as government officials, freely take the belongings of others without any fear of the consequences. When the general public becomes corrupt then their leaders and other people in influential social positions are inspired to act in the same way believing this behaviour is accepted by the general public. This leads to corruption on a national level. But if the general public obeyed Allah, the Exalted, and avoided mistreating others through corruption then their leaders and those in an influential social position would not dare act in a corrupt way full well knowing the general public would not stand for it. And according to the Hadith quoted earlier, if the general public remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, He would protect them from corrupt officials by appointing people into influential positions who are just in their affairs.

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

"…Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves…"

An Act of Gratitude

During the expedition to Egypt, the conquest of Balbees led to the capture of the daughter of Egypt's ruler. The Muslim general, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded his soldiers of the Islamic principle of repaying goodness with goodness: chapter 55 Ar Rahman, verse 60:

"Is the reward for good [anything] but good?"

Then he reminded them that the ruler of Egypt sent a gift to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many years ago and they should repay this favour by sending him his daughter and all those that were captured with her and the wealth that was seized with her also. They agreed to it and her father was pleased at the conduct of the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 314-316.

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

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

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

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

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

Attitude of the Muslims

During the expedition to Egypt, the fortress of Babliyon was besieged by the Muslims. The ruler of Egypt, Al Muqawqis, dispatched a letter with some of his envoys to the leader of the Muslims, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah pleased with him. The envoys remained for two days with the Muslims and on their return Al Muqawqis asked them to describe the Muslims to him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 325-327.

The envoys described the Muslims as a people to whom death was dearer to than life.

This is because they preferred the hereafter over the material world. One can adopt this attitude when they adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

The envoys also described the Muslims as a people to whom humility was dearer to than high status.

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 be raised in rank when they live with humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs as humility is an important aspect of servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The opposite of humility which is pride only belongs to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, as everything which people possess was created and granted by Him. Understanding this reality ensures one avoids pride and instead shows humility by obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. This is true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, and leads to true greatness in both worlds.

The envoys also described the Muslims as a people who had no desire or love for the material world.

When people, irrespective of their faith, go on holiday they only pack the things they need and maybe a little extra but they try to avoid over packing.

Even the amount of money they take with them they limit in respect to their stay abroad. When they arrive they often stay in a hotel which usually has the main necessities of living with a few extras. If they believe they will never return to the same destination in the future they will never buy a house as they will claim they stay is short and they will not return. They do not get a job during their holiday claiming that they stay is short so they do not need to earn more money. They do not get married nor have children claiming the holiday destination is not their homeland where they would get married and have children. Generally speaking, this is the attitude and mind-set of holiday makers.

It is strange how Muslims truly believe they will depart from this world soon meaning, they stay in the world is temporary just like being on holiday, and they believe their stay in the hereafter will be permanent yet, they do not adequately prepare for it. If they truly realised the short time they have, similarly to a holiday, they would not dedicate too much effort on their homes and instead be content with a simple home just like the traveller who is content with a simple hotel. So in reality, this world is like the holiday destination in the example yet, Muslims do not treat it like one. Instead, they dedicate the majority of their efforts in beautifying their world while neglecting the eternal hereafter. It is sometimes hard to believe some Muslims actually believe in the permanent hereafter when one observes the amount of effort they dedicate to the temporal world. Muslims should therefore strive in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience while being pleased with obtaining and utilising the necessities of this world. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to live in this world as travellers in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. They should not take this world as a permanent home and instead treat it like a holiday destination.

The envoys also described the Muslims as a people whose leader was like one of them and those of high status could not be distinguished from the lowly nor the master from the slave.

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

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

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

The envoys also described the Muslims as a people who stood up for prayers with humility and not one of them remained behind from the prayers.

Even though, there are many obligatory duties on Muslims yet, the greatest of them is establishing the obligatory prayers. This is when one performs the prayers while fulfilling all their conditions and etiquettes, such as performing them on time. This is because abandoning the obligatory prayers in most cases is the first step which leads to major sins and misguidance. This has been indicated in the Holy Quran. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

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

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

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

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

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

All Are Equal

During the expedition to Egypt, the fortress of Babliyon was besieged by the Muslims. The ruler of Egypt, Al Muqawqis, dispatched a letter with some of his envoys to the leader of the Muslims, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah pleased with him. The envoys remained for two days with the Muslims and on their return Al Muqawqis asked them to describe the Muslims to him. After hearing about them he decided it would be best to negotiate a peace deal with them so he asked Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, to send him some men he could discuss terms with. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a group and appointed Ubadah Ibn As Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, as their leader. When they reached the ruler's court, Ubadah, may Allah be pleased with him, stepped forward to address Al Muqawqis but the latter dismissed him as he was dark skinned. Al Muqwqis demanded someone else address him but the group of Muslims replied that Ubadah, may Allah be pleased with him, was their leader, the best of them, the foremost amongst them and the wisest of them. They added, that the colour of one's skin has no weight in Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 325-328.

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

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

all worldly things such as wealth, ethnicity, gender or social brotherhoods and castes.

How to Live

During the expedition to Egypt, the fortress of Babliyon was besieged by the Muslims. The ruler of Egypt, Al Muqawqis, dispatched a letter with some of his envoys to the leader of the Muslims, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah pleased with him. The envoys remained for two days with the Muslims and on their return Al Muqawqis asked them to describe the Muslims to him. After hearing about them he decided it would be best to negotiate a peace deal with them so he asked Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, to send him some men he could discuss terms with. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, dispatched a group and appointed Ubadah Ibn As Samit, may Allah be pleased with him, as their leader. When Ubadah, may Allah pleased with him, addressed Al Muqawqis he told him that the reason for their campaign against their enemies, who wage war against Allah, the Exalted, is not the hope for worldly gains or the accumulation of wealth as none of them care if they earn a mountain of gold or only a silver coin through war, as all they want from this world is something to eat and ward off hunger and a cloth to wrap themselves in. If any one of them owns nothing more than that, they would be satisfied. If any one of them earned a mountain of gold, they would spend it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and be content with the little that is left in their hands. This is because the pleasure of this material world is not true pleasure and its luxury is not true luxury: rather real pleasure and luxury come in the hereafter. This is how Allah, the Exalted, guided them and what the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught them. He advised them that their ambition in this world should be just to have enough to ward off hunger and cover their bodies, their main concern should be to please Allah, the Exalted, and strive against His enemies. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 325-328.

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

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

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

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated a rider not someone walking as the one who is walking would rest more

under the shade of the tree than a rider. This further indicates the limited time people spend in this world.

Taking a rest in the shade indicates the importance of one correctly using the material world in order to obtain the provisions they need just like the rider takes the provision they need namely, rest. A Muslim should therefore prepare for their immediate departure from this world by preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

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

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."

Strength of Muslims

During the expedition of Egypt, which was under Roman control, Alexandria, its capital, was besieged by the Muslims yet they were finding it difficult to conquer it. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was concerned about the time it was taking to conquer it and wrote a letter to his commander, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him. He reminded him that perhaps this delay was due to some sins his army was committing or perhaps because they had started to love this material world. He added, that Allah, the Exalted, only grants victory to those who are sincere to Him. Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, and his men prayed two cycles of prayer and beseeched Him for his forgiveness and mercy and then victory was granted to them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 321-322.

It is amazing how Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not believe the delay in victory was due to some tactical error. He instead understood that victory comes from Allah, the Exalted, and is granted to those who sincerely obey Him.

Even though, much of the world's natural resources, such as oil, are in the hands of Muslims yet, the Muslims as a nation have very little influence on society and other nations. Muslims often blame others for this social weakness, such as the countries in the west. They blame their propaganda against Muslims as the cause of this widespread social weakness and

influence. Unfortunately, many do not understand that this was not the habit of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them. They were few in a number yet, overcame entire nations. This is because instead of finger pointing at others they looked in the mirror and assessed their own characters and changed for the better according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It was this sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which led to their strength even if they were few in number. Whereas, many Muslims today are so busy pointing fingers at others that they do not reflect on their flaws and disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. This caused them to become satisfied with themselves, which according to some scholars, is the root of all evil traits. This is because the one who is satisfied with themself will not strive to search for their own faults nor will they correct them according to the teachings of Islam. This will always lead to bad characteristics and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4019, that when Muslims break their covenant of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, their enemies will be granted power over them and they will freely take the belongings of Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even declared in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4297, that a time will come when Muslims will be great in number but still have no value in the eyes of the world. This is because of their love for the material world and their dislike for death. The love of the material world will always cause one to turn away from preparing for the hereafter. This will result in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and thus the influence of the Muslim nation will become insignificant.

Muslims should stop blaming others and instead reflect on their own character and correct it according to the teachings of Islam. This will cause them to strive for and love the hereafter. Allah, the Exalted, will then put

their awe and respect in the hearts of the rest of society just like He done for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This will allow the Islamic nation to once again obtain strength and influence within society. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

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

Loving for Others

During the expedition to Egypt, the ruler of Alexandria offered a peace deal with the Muslims meaning, they would pay the tax (Jizya) if their land and prisoners were returned to them. Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, accepted this deal but told his general, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, to first offer Islam to every single prisoner and if they rejected Islam then the tax (Jizya) would be taken from them. When the prisoners were gathered, they were given the option one by one, and every prisoner who accepted Islam was welcomed with a thunderous magnification of Allah, the Exalted, by the Muslims (takbeer), whereas everyone who rejected it was met with signs of remorse and regret from the Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 336-337.

Even though rejecting Islam financially benefited the Muslims, as they would take the tax (Jizya) from the non-Muslims, yet their conduct makes it clear that they were more concerned about the people accepting Islam than gaining financial benefit. This is an aspect of loving for others what one loves for themself.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 themself.

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 themself. 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 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 the 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 themself 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. 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 themself 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 themself 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.

Striving for Allah (SWT)

Umar Ibn Khattab once told a messenger sent by Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with them, with the glad tidings of the conquest of Egypt, that his concern for people prevented him from sleeping during the day and his concern for himself prevented him from sleeping at night. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 335.

The concern for people indicates the great sincerity he possessed for others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards to the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themself.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

The concern for himself prevented Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, from sleeping at night.

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1145, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, descends every night to the nearest Heaven according to His infinite majesty and invites people to ask Him to fulfill their needs so that He can fulfill them.

Voluntary night time worship proves one's sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, as no other eyes are watching them. Offering it is a means to having an intimate conversation with Allah, the Exalted. And it is a sign of one's servanthood to Him. It has countless virtues for example, a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1614, declares that it is the best voluntary prayer.

No one will have a rank higher on Judgment Day or in Paradise than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and this rank has been directly connected to the voluntary night prayer. This shows that those who establish the night voluntary prayer will be blessed with the highest ranks in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 79:

“And from [part of] the night, pray with it [i.e., recitation of the Quran] as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.”

A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3579, advises that a Muslim is closest to Allah, the Exalted, in the last part of the night. Therefore, one can derive countless blessings if they remember Allah, the Exalted, at this time.

All Muslims desire their supplications to be answered and their needs to be fulfilled. Therefore, they should strive to offer the voluntary night prayer as a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1770, advises that there is a special hour in every night when good supplications are always answered.

Establishing the voluntary night prayer is an excellent way to prevent one from committing sins, it helps a person to stay away from pointless social gatherings and it protects a person from many physical illnesses. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3549.

One should prepare for the voluntary night prayer by not over eating or drinking especially, before bed as it induces laziness. One should not unnecessarily tire themself out during the day. A short nap during the day can help with this. Finally, one should avoid sins and strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience as the obedient find it easier to offer the voluntary night prayer.

Kind Treatment

After conquering Egypt and during the first Friday sermon at Al Fustat, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the Muslims to treat the locals well as they had a treaty of peace with them and they were connected to them through marriage (through their ancestor, the wife of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, Hajarah, may Allah be pleased with her, who was Egyptian). He commanded the Muslims to refrain from harming them and to pay extra respect to their womenfolk by lowering their gazes. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 342.

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 verbal and physical sins 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 which 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 taken account for every person who acts on their bad advice. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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 will be needed in order to obtain success on the Day of Judgment. 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.

Homes of Allah (SWT)

Whenever any Muslim army built a fortified post or founded a new city, the first thing they did was establish a Mosque because it was essential in spreading Islamic knowledge and establishing the prayers. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 367.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most beloved places to Allah, the Exalted, are the Mosques and the most hated places to Him are the market places.

Islam does not prohibit Muslims from going to places other than the Mosques. Nor does it command them to always inhabit the Mosques. But it is important that they prioritize attending Mosques for the congregational prayers and attending religious gatherings over visiting the market places unnecessarily.

When a need arises there is no harm to attend other places, such as shopping centers, but a Muslim should avoid going to them unnecessarily as they are places where sins more often occur. Whereas, the Mosques are meant to be a sanctuary from sins and a comfortable place to obey Allah, the Exalted, in. This involves fulfilling the commands of Allah, the

Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. Just like a student benefits from a library as it is an environment created for studying similarly, Muslims can benefit from Mosques as their very purpose is to encourage Muslims to obtain and act on useful knowledge so that they can obey Allah, the Exalted.

Not only should a Muslim prioritize the Mosques over other places but they should encourage others such as their children to do the same. In fact, it is an excellent place for the youth to avoid sins, crimes and bad company, which lead to nothing but trouble and regret in both worlds.

Religious Freedom

It is important note that even though parts of the Islamic empire increased through fighting yet the goal was never to gain land or power, unlike all other empires in history. The aim was to give the people of foreign lands the opportunity to hear the teachings of Islam, which was being prevented by foreign powers, so that they could willingly either accept or reject Islam. As Islam is a faith which must be accepted by the heart, forcing people to accept Islam through the sword is simply not possible. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong…"

Like his predecessors before him, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured that all people under his rulership had the freedom to choose whether to accept Islam or to reject it.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, commanded his leaders and soldiers to respect and fulfill the rights of the citizens of the newly-conquered lands who chose to reject Islam. They gave the same rights to those who accepted Islam all Muslims are owed, even though they might have recently fought against the Muslims. By implementing the teachings of Islam just and peaceful societies were formed and through this many people accepted Islam after witnessing its widespread

benefits and truths. Whether people accepted Islam or not, the Muslims gained the loyalty of the citizens as they acted with justice.

On one occasion, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, invited his Christian servant to embrace Islam but the latter refused. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that there was no compulsion in faith and did not pursue the matter further. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was dying he freed this servant.

Even after conquering Jerusalem, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, made a treaty with the non-Muslims living there that their lives, wealth, crosses and Churches would be protected. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Page 203.

It is clear from history that no other religion which dominated a land ever gave such freedom to the other religions under its authority to practice their faith openly and without fear of persecution.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, went much further than this and instead organized benefit schemes for the old and disabled non-Muslims living within Islamic lands. For example, he once saw an old blind Jew begging. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, took him home and gave him some things. He then summoned the trustee of the public treasury and ordered him to aid the blind man from then on and to search for others like him an aid them too. He also removed the need for the poor and disabled to pay the tax (Jizyah), which the non-Muslims living in

Islamic lands would pay to the government. This tax was also not taken when the state failed to protect and provide the basic public services to the non-Muslims living in Islamic territories. In fact, during the expedition to Syria, during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, when the Muslim armies were forced to retreat to the border of the Roman empire, which eventually led to the Battle of Yarmuk, the tax taken from the non-Muslims in the areas within Syria which the Muslims initially controlled, was given back to the people. When receiving their wealth back the people commented that they hoped that the Muslims would gain victory of the Romans and return to them as the Muslims treated them better than the Romans did. The Romans would take everything from them and leave them with nothing, whereas, the Muslims were returning their wealth to them, even during a time of war. The tax was also not taken when the non-Muslims participated in protecting their land from foreign enemies. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 1, Pages 204-205 & 444-446.

Preferring the Hereafter

During his final Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj), in the 23rd year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, stopped at Abtah, on the way to Mina. He made a pile of sand and laid on it and then supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, that he had become old and the people under his care had scattered throughout the lands therefore he desired to be taken to Allah, the Exalted, (in death) while in devotion to Him and without his efforts going to waste. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 102.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, did not ask for death rather, he asked to be taken while Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with him. Supplicating in this way is permissible in Islam. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5671.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, for martyrdom and to die in the city of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 101.

Preferring the hereafter is only possible when one adopts the correct understanding and perception in respect to this world and the hereafter.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4108, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the material world compared to the hereafter is like a drop of water compared to an ocean.

In reality, this parable was given in order for people to understand how small the material world is compared to the hereafter. But in reality they cannot be compared as the material world is temporal whereas the hereafter is eternal. Meaning, the limited cannot be compared to the unlimited. The material world can be split into four categories: fame, fortune, authority and one's social life, such as their family and friends. No matter what worldly blessing one obtains which falls within these groups it will always be imperfect, transient and death will cut a person off from the blessing. On the other hand, the blessings in the hereafter are lasting and perfect. So in this respect the material world is no more than a drop compared to an endless ocean.

In addition, a person is not guaranteed to experience a long life in this world as the time of death is unknown. Whereas, everyone is guaranteed to experience death and reach the hereafter. So it is foolish to strive for a day, such as one's retirement, which they may never reach over striving for the hereafter which they are guaranteed to reach.

This does not mean one should abandon the world as it is a bridge which must be crossed in order to reach the hereafter safely. Instead, a Muslim should take from this material world enough to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. And then dedicate the rest of their efforts in preparing for the eternal hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the teachings of Islam.

An intelligent person will not prioritize the drop of water over an endless ocean and an intelligent Muslim would not prioritize the temporal material world over the eternal hereafter.

A Reminder

The engraving on the seal-ring of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him was, “Death is enough of an admonisher O Umar.” This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti’s, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 139.

This indicates how often Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would reflect on death and preparing for it.

Death is something which is certain to occur but the time is unknown so it therefore makes sense that a Muslim who believes in the hereafter prioritises preparing for it over preparing for things which might not occur, such as marriage, children or their retirement. It is strange how many Muslims have adopted the opposite mentality even though they testify that the world is temporary and uncertain whereas the hereafter is permanent and they are certain to reach it. No matter how one behaves they will be judged regarding their deeds. A Muslim should not be fooled into believing that they can and will prepare for the hereafter in the future as this attitude only causes them to delay further until their death occurs and they leave this world with regrets that will not aid them.

So the important thing is not that people will die as this is unavoidable but the key is acting in such a way that one is fully prepared for it. The only way to prepare for it correctly is by acting on the teachings of Islam namely,

fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This is only possible when one prioritises preparing for the hereafter over preparing for things which might not occur.

Nobility is in Faith

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if Salim the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with them, was alive at the time, he would have appointed him the next Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 141.

This indicates the importance of understanding that true nobility lies in the strength of one's faith.

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

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

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

Qualities of Leadership

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if he appointed Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with them, as the next Caliph and was questioned about this by Allah, the Exalted, he would reply that he did this as he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, say about Salim, may Allah be pleased with him, that he deeply loved Allah, the Exalted, with all his heart. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 398.

The root of this love is sincerity.

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

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

seek their reward from those who they acted for, which will not be possible. Chapter 98 Al Bayyinah, verse 5.

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

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

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

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

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if Abu Ubaidah Bin Jarrah, may Allah be pleased with him, outlived him he would appoint him as the next Caliph. And when Allah, the Exalted, asked him about this, he would reply that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, say that the trustee of his nation was Abu Ubaidah, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Pages 140-141.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that betraying trusts is an aspect of hypocrisy.

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 the way which is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. 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.

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that if Mu'adh Bin Jabbal, may Allah be pleased with him, outlived him he would appoint him as the next Caliph. And when Allah, the Exalted, asked him about this, he would reply that he heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, say that when Mu'adh, may Allah be pleased with him, will be raised on the Day of Judgement, he will lead the scholars and gnostics and he will stand at a distance of a stone's throw ahead of them. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 573.

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

There is no doubt that every Muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many Muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important

to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many Muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many Muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day Muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But Muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

Assassination of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Slave of the World

Al Mugheerah Ibn Shu'bath, may Allah be pleased with him, had a non-Muslim slave named Abu Luluah who used to make grindstones. Al Mugheerah, may Allah be pleased with him, would take four silver coins from him each day. Abu Lulu complained to Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, and asked him to command Al Mugheerah, may Allah be pleased with him, to reduce the amount he took from him. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, warned him to fear Allah, the Exalted, and be good to his owner but he did fully intend to talk to Al Mugheerah, may Allah be pleased with him. But as this response was not good enough to Abu Luluah, he became angry and plotted to kill Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 383-384.

It was clear the Abu Luluah was not only a slave of a person but also a slave of his own desires, as the response from Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not unjust.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of

wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a Muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A Muslim should know Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

Sincerity to the Prayer

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was dying he did not let the congregational prayer be terminated. This indicates his great love for the prayer.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms…”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer…”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 6:

“…But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it…”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some Muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

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

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma’un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a Muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty

correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families most encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worse thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“…and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on Muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the Muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those Muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

Fearing Accountability

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where a young man entered upon him and praised him for being a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, and for his Caliphate which was full of justice. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, responded that he wished that all his privileges would counterbalance is shortcomings so that he would not lose nor gain anything. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

This indicates the fear of his accountability that Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Humility

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, entered upon him and praised him for being a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, and being one of those who the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with when he died. And he praised him for supporting Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, during his Caliphate and being one of those who Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was pleased with when he died. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that these were all favours bestowed upon him by none other than Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in a Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700 and 3692.

This indicates the great humility Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 63:

“And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily…”

The servants of Allah, the Exalted, have understood that anything good they possess is solely because Allah, the Exalted, granted it to them. And any evil they are saved from is because Allah, the Exalted, protected them. Is it not foolish to be proud of something that does not belong to someone? Just like a person does not boast about a sports car which does not belong to them Muslims must realize nothing in reality belongs to them. This attitude ensures one remains humble at all times. The humble servants of Allah, the Exalted, fully believe in the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, which declares that the righteous deeds of a person will not take them to Paradise. Only the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, can cause this to occur. This is because every righteous deed is only possible when Allah, the Exalted, provides one with the knowledge, strength, opportunity and inspiration to perform it. Even the acceptance of the deed is dependent on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. When one bares this in mind it saves them from pride and inspires them to adopt humility. One should always remember that being humble is not a sign of weakness as Islam has encouraged one to defend themself if necessary. In other words, Islam teaches Muslims to be humble without weakness. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, that whoever humbles themself before Allah, the Exalted, will be raised by Him. So in reality, humility leads

to honor in both worlds. One only needs to reflect on the most humble of the creation to understand this fact namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, has clearly ordered people by ordering the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to adopt this important quality. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 215:

"And lower your wing [i.e., show kindness] to those who follow you of the believers."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, led a humble life. For example, he happily carried out the domestic duties at home thereby proving these chores are gender-neutral. This is confirmed in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 538.

Humility is an inner characteristic that manifests outwards such as the way one walks. This is discussed in another verse chapter 31 Luqman, verse 18:

"And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly…"

Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that Paradise is for the humble servants who possess no trace of pride. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 83:

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.”

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1998, that whoever possesses an atom’s worth of pride will not enter Paradise. Only Allah, the Exalted, has the right to be proud as He is the Creator, Sustainer and Owner of the entire universe.

It is important to note, pride is when one believes they are superior to others and rejects the truth when it is presented to them as they dislike accepting the truth when it comes from other than them. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4092.

Regrets

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, entered upon him and praised him for being a Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, and being one of those who the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was pleased with when he died. And he praised him for supporting Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, during his Caliphate and being one of those who Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, was pleased with when he died. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that these were all favours bestowed upon him by none other than Allah, the Exalted. He concluded that if he possessed gold equal to the Earth, he would ransom himself from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, before he met Him. This has been discussed in a Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700 and 3692.

Even though Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, dedicated his whole life preparing for the Day of Judgement, these words indicate the importance of avoiding leading such a life whereby one fails to prepare practically for the Day of Judgement and in their final moments are left with nothing but regrets. Regrets, which will not aid them in their time of need.

It is important for Muslims to understand that whenever they face any type of worldly failure or regrets they should remind themselves of the regrets in the hereafter some people will have, such as the one mentioned in chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 24:

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

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

Therefore, every Muslim should be more concerned with the failures they may encounter in the hereafter over the failures and regrets of this world.

This does not mean one should not strive to achieve lawful success in this world. It means they should always prioritise gaining success in the hereafter over gaining success in this world. This is an important mentality Muslims should adopt before they reach a day where reflecting on their failures and regrets will not help them in the slightest. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verse 23:

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

The Best Companionship

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where he told his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to ensure his debts were paid off and told him to ask the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, for permission to be buried in her house, next to his two Companions, meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. He stressed to his son not to ask her for permission while referring to him as the Caliph, as he was no longer the Caliph. She commented that she wished to be buried there herself but preferred Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to herself. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was notified he responded that nothing was more important to him than this. He told his son to ask her permission

again after he dies and if she gave permission to bury him with his two Companions otherwise in the cemetery of the Muslims. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

He did not refer to himself as the Caliph, as he did not want to influence Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, into agreeing reluctantly as he was the leader of the Muslims. By asking permission a second time after his death, he gave Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, a chance to change her mind as she might have initially agreed reluctantly as he was dying at the time.

Every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they barely know him as they are too busy to study his life, character and teachings. This is foolish as how can one truly love someone they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on the life, character and teachings of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

Grieving for Others

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where he told his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to ensure his debts were paid off and told him to ask the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, for permission to be buried in her house, next to his two Companions meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, which she agreed to. Then the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the daughter of Umar, Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with them, visited her father and wept over him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. They are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another…”

The Counsel for the Caliphate

Rulership

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where he told his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to ensure his debts were paid off and told him to ask the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, for permission to be buried in her house, next to his two Companions meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, which she agreed to. When he was urged

to nominate the next Caliph, he advised them that the next Caliph would be appointed from the following six people, whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been pleased with before he died: Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Uthman Ibn Affan, Az Zubair Bin Awwam, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas and Abdur Rahman Bin Auf, may Allah be pleased with them. Umar, stressed that his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, would not be appointed Caliph but he could help choose the next one. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also appointed Shoaib Ar Rumi, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the congregational prayers until the next Caliph was appointed. He avoided selecting one of the six he choose to be the next Caliph from leading the prayers as this would have been a type of endorsement from Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to who the next Caliph should be. He did not desire to influence the selection in any way. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Page 398.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, avoided the tradition of kings by preventing his son from becoming the next Caliph, even though he was worthy of it. He only desired the best man for the job so selected the six who were best suited for the role of Caliph. This indicates the great sincerity Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had for the people.

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

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

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

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

"…Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them…"

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

"…And do good as Allah has done good to you…"

Final Commands

When Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was dying he commanded his son with the following, which has been recorded in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 154.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, told him not to spend much on his shroud for if Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with him, He would exchange it for him with something which was better. But if He was angry with him, then He would strip him of his shroud.

Even in his shroud Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, avoided extravagance.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2886, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, criticized the slaves of wealth and fine clothing. These people are pleased when they receive these things and become displeased when they do not.

In reality, this applies to all non-essential worldly things. This criticism is not directed at those who strive in the material world in order to fulfill their

needs and the needs of their dependents as this is a part of obeying Allah, the Exalted. But it is directed at those who either pursue the unlawful in order to obtain wealth and other worldly things in order to satisfy their desires and the desires of others. And it is directed at those who pursue non-essential lawful things in such a way that it causes them to neglect obeying Allah, the Exalted, correctly. This obedience involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This prevents them from preparing adequately for the hereafter and their final judgment.

In addition, this criticism is for those who are impatient when they do not obtain their unnecessary desires in this world. This attitude can cause a Muslim to obey Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, they obey Him when they obtain their desires but when they do not they angrily turn away from His obedience. The Holy Quran has warned of a severe loss in both worlds for the one who adopts this attitude. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

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

Muslims should instead learn to be patient and content with what they possess as this is true richness according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2420. In reality, the person full of desires is needy meaning, poor even if they possess much wealth. A Muslim should know

Allah, the Exalted, grants people what is best for them and not according to their desires as this in most cases would lead to their destruction. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allah had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also told him to be economical when digging his grave for if Allah, the Exalted, was pleased with him, then it would expand as far as the eye sight can reach. But if He was angry with him, then the grave would tighten upon him until his ribs interlaced. He also told him to be swift in burying him for if there was good in him then he would be moving to what is better. But if there was bad in him, then they would be removing an evil from their shoulders by being swift.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2460, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a grave is either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. This Hadith further explains that when a successful believer is placed in their grave it widens and becomes comfortable for them whereas, the grave of a sinful person becomes extremely constricted and harmful for them.

It is important to note, that in reality each person takes the garden of Paradise or pit of Hell with them when they depart this world namely, their deeds. If a Muslim obeys Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then it will ensure they prepare the deeds required to make their grave a garden of Paradise. But if they disobey Allah, the Exalted, then their sins will create the pit of Hell they will rest in until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, Muslims must act today and not delay in this preparation as the time of death is unknown and often comes suddenly. Delaying to a tomorrow one may not see is foolish and it only leads to regrets. The same way a person spends much energy and time beautifying their home in this world they must strive harder in beautifying their grave as the journey there is inevitable and the stay there long. And if one suffers in their grave then what follows will only be worse. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also told him that no one should attribute purity to him which he did not possess, for Allah, the Exalted, has more knowledge of him.

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. 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. 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. They should instead advise others about this Hadith and warn them not to over praise others.

Only in certain cases is praising others acceptable and must include not over praising them, sticking with 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 fulfilling the duties of Islam.

Final Advice

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, already knew he would be martyred as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3675.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, once came out to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As soon as he began the prayer, he was heard saying, the dog has killed me. Then a non-Muslim slave, Abu Luluah, stabbed him with a poisoned double-edged knife. The man attempted to flee and stabbed thirteen people, seven of whom died, until a Muslim threw a cloak over him and when he realized he had been caught, he killed himself. Before Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, fell, he took the hand of Abdur Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, and pushed him forward so that he could finish leading the congregational prayer. After this he was carried to his home where he told his son, Abdullah Bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, to ensure his debts were paid off and told him to ask the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, for permission to be buried in her house, next to his two Companions meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, which she agreed to. Before he died he gave the following advice, which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, Umar Ibn Al Khattab, His Life & Times, Volume 2, Pages 389-390.

He advised the next Caliph to take good care of the early migrants to Medina from Mecca, may Allah be pleased with them, to know their rights and protect their honour and possessions. For him to also take good care of the Companions of Medina (helpers), may Allah be pleased with them. He urged the next Caliph to be lenient with them, by accepting their good and excusing their wrongdoing. He should also treat the people of the towns well. He should treat well the Arab Bedouins, as they are the origin of the Arabs and the material of Islam. He should take their inferior possessions and distribute it to the poor among them (obligatory charity). Finally, the Caliph should fulfill the rights of the non-Muslims under the Islamic rule by fighting and defending them and not to overburden them with what was beyond their ability.

Generally speaking, this advice of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, urges gentleness.

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 themself 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 commits 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 then 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, [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…”

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 Mosa 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]."

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to fear Allah, the Exalted, with regard to the people but not to fear the people in regard to Allah, the Exalted.

Islam teaches Muslims that they should never compromise on their faith in order to gain something from the material world. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 135:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives...”

As the material world is temporary whatever one gains from it will eventually fade away and they will be held accountable for their actions and attitude in the hereafter. On the other hand, faith is the precious jewel which guides a Muslim through all difficulties in this world and in the

hereafter safely. Therefore, it is plain foolishness to compromise the thing which is more beneficial and lasting for the sake of a temporary thing.

Many people especially women, will encounter moments in their lives where they will have to choose whether to compromise on their faith. For example, in some cases a Muslim woman may believe that if she removed her scarf and dressed a certain way she would be more respected at work and may even climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Similarly, in the corporate world it is considered important to mingle with colleagues after work hours. So a Muslim might find themself being invited to a pub or club after work.

In times like this it is important to remember that ultimate victory and success will only be granted to those who remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam. Those who act in this way will be granted worldly and religious success. But more importantly their worldly success will not become a burden for them. In fact, it will become a means for Allah, the Exalted, to increase their rank and remembrance amongst mankind. Examples of this are the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam. They did not compromise on their faith and instead remained steadfast throughout their lives and in return Allah, the Exalted, granted them a worldly and religious empire.

All other forms of success are very temporal and sooner or later they become a difficulty for its bearer. One only needs to observe the many celebrities who compromised on their ideals and belief in order to obtain

fame and fortune only for these things to become a cause of their sadness, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even suicide.

Reflect on these two paths for a moment and then decide which one should be preferred and chosen.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not show any favour to the rich over the poor.

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

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

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

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to be strict in the commands of Allah, the Exalted, His sacred limits and in treating the people well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised Muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a Muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

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

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

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek

the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

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

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not be lenient when it comes to enforcing the legal punishments.

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not fear the blame of the critics.

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 it 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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to adhere to the truth and strive hard to reach it.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness as three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The next level is when one is truthful through their words. This in reality means they avoid all types of verbal sins not just lies. As the one who indulges in other verbal sins cannot be a real truthful person. An excellent way of achieving this is by acting on a Hadith found in

Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, which advises that a person can only make their Islam excellent when they avoid getting involved in the things which do not concern them. The majority of verbal sins occur because a Muslim discusses something which does not concern them. The final stage is truthfulness in actions. This is achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and being patient with destiny according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cheery picking or misinterpreting the teachings of Islam which suit one's desires. They must adhere to hierarchy and priority order set by Allah, the Exalted, in all actions.

The consequences of the opposite of these levels of truthfulness namely, lying, according to the main Hadith under discussion, is that it leads to disobedience which in turn leads to the fire of Hell. When one persists on this attitude they will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to always admonish himself.

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find

the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to show mercy to the Muslims, honour the elderly, show compassion to the young and respect the knowledgeable.

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 themself which 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.

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 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.

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. 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. A Muslim should continue with this duty irrespective of if it effects people or not as this is not under their control. They will be rewarded for their sincere intention and efforts.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not allow wealth to circulate only among the rich.

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

This means that the majority of wealthy people incorrectly spend their wealth meaning, on things which are either vain and therefore provide them with no benefit in the hereafter, or they spend on sinful things which will become a burden for them in both worlds or they spend on lawful things in a way disliked by Islam such as being wasteful or extravagant. Because of these reasons the rich will become poor on Judgment Day as they will be held accountable and even punished over them.

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

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

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

The truly rich person is the one who uses their wealth correctly as prescribed by Islam. This person will be rich in this world and in the next. And this attitude is not dependent of having much wealth. Any amount of wealth used correctly will cause one to become rich even if they possess little wealth. In reality, this person takes their wealth with them to the hereafter and this attitude provides them free time which allows them to perform righteous deeds which only increases their richness in the hereafter.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not close his door to the people.

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 thereby failing 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 to 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 instead aid others. In reality, the one who only cares about themself 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.

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.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the next Caliph to not allow the strong to oppress the weak.

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 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, 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 themself 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 but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

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 on desires. A Muslim may believe they are acting for 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 and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

A Fine Role Model

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, he was placed on his bed and the people surrounded him, supplicating for him. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed for him and commented that there was no one that he would love to meet Allah, the Exalted, with deeds like theirs more than Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3685.

This indicates the importance of choosing a good role model.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe many people who achieved great worldly success and in some cases benefited mankind yet, they will also observe at least one thing which taints their achievements. But if one observes the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will observe nothing except success and countless things which benefit mankind. Even though, there are people who falsely criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it is quite evident from his highly accurate and detailed biography which has been verified by reliable Muslim and non-Muslim historians that this criticism is based on nothing but falsehood. This is why Muslims must put aside all role models and instead study and adopt the flawless character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the only way to achieve real untainted success in both one's worldly and religious life. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

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

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

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

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

Good Companionship

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, he was placed on his bed and the people surrounded him, supplicating for him. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed for him and commented that he always thought that Allah, the Exalted, would keep him with his two Companions, meaning the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, as he often heard the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioning himself, Abu Bakkar and Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, together. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3685.

His good companionship in this world led to good companionship in the hereafter.

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 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 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 it. 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. 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 preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

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 they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

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

Nominating Uthman Ibn Affan (RA) as Caliph

The Next Caliph

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, and based on his advice, the six he nominated: Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Uthman Ibn Affan, Az Zubair Bin Awwam, Talha Ibn Ubaydullah, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas and Abdur Rahman Bin Auf, may Allah be pleased with them, held a meeting. Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, urged the others to reduce the candidates for rulership to three. Az Zubair gave up his right in favour of Ali, may Allah be pleased with them. Talha gave up his right in favour of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them. Sa'd gave up his right in favour of Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with them. Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, gave up his right and urged the remaining two, meaning Ali and Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, to give up their right in favour of their companion. Both of them remained silent and were thinking on what to do. Then Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, asked permission from them to consult others so that he could finally decide who should be the next Caliph. They both agreed to his suggestion. Eventually, Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him, pledged allegiance to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and the first person after him to pledge allegiance was Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. After this the rest of the people pledged allegiance to him also. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3700.

It is clear that each of them acted in complete sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and were not motivated by worldly reasons and that they were completely pleased with Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as the next Caliph.

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

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

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

If one is lax in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, it proves a lack of sincerity. Therefore, they should sincerely repent and struggle to

fulfil them all. It is important to bear in mind Allah, the Exalted, never burdens one with duties they cannot perform or handle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

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

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

A Truthful Eulogy

The rank of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, was decreed in the Heavens and was then established on Earth as the harbinger of the truthful Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He was the voice of the truth and judged everything by the criterion of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. His wisdom and forbearance are forever his banners and through him Allah, the Exalted, strengthened His message and supported the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, embraced Islam, its banners rose high for he was the answer to the supplication of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3681. Since that day, Islam became populace and its foundation took firm roots. Through his God-given magnanimity the Muslims turn of fortune became obvious. The voice of the believers was heard after being clandestine. The spirit of the believers was uplifted and he brought about a new clarity and determination to defend the divine revelation. From that day on, the deceit of the unbelievers and their ruses were heavily shaken. The weight of their numbers no longer influenced the balance of power and their villainous stratagem was openly challenged and was doomed to fail. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had a remarkable strong faith. His determination to put an end to the schemes of those who challenged Islam compelled the unbelievers to rethink their methods. He challenged them publicly through his unquestionable trust and irreproachable reliance on the supreme power and help of Allah, the Exalted. He also shared in the hardships and the sufferings of the believers in anticipation of seeing the promise of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled, His religion established and to serve His supreme will on Earth. His equanimity spoke even when he was silent, his immanence transcended his strength, his ascetic detachment stated his intention, his poised words were near prophetic and in fact, they were

supported by divine revelation several times. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, Number 402. Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, loved Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and Allah, the Exalted, made his words resonate with truth and justice. In turn, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, loved Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and feared none besides his Lord.

Conclusion

It is clear when studying the blessed life of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that he dedicated all his efforts in pleasing Allah, the Exalted. He supported his verbal declaration of faith by practically obeying and following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He did not cherry pick the commands which suited his desires, rather, he submitted completely to Allah, the Exalted, and diligently implemented every command of Allah, the Exalted, and refrained from every prohibition. His single aim was to please Allah, the Exalted, and all his words and actions were directed to this noble goal. This attitude encouraged him to spiritually detach from the material world, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of according to one's own desires. And he spiritually attached to the hereafter by dedicating his efforts towards practically preparing for it. It was this characteristic which made him and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the best group after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This truth has been discussed in Imam Abu Na'im Al-Asfahani's, Hilyat Ul Awliya Wa Tabaqat Al Asfiya, Narration 278. Therefore, Muslims must follow in his footsteps by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they too achieve peace and success in both worlds.

In addition, when studying his life, it is clear that the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not reach the future generations easily. They reached them through the blood, tears, sweat and sacrifices of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Unfortunately, this fact is often overlooked by

Muslims today, as the teachings of Islam are so readily available nowadays. One can imagine how disappointing Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would be if he could see how the majority of Muslims dismiss the teachings of Islam, even though he and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, sacrificed everything so that Islam could reach the future generations. No doubt, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, will receive their rewards for their sacrifices but Muslims must acknowledge the fact that they are indebted to them. This acknowledgement must be shown in actions not just words. This involves sincerely learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the only way one acknowledges, honors and loves the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Words without actions is closer to hypocrisy than love.

Finally, every Muslim openly declares that they desire the companionship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon him them, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter. They often quote the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will be with those they love in the hereafter. And because of this they openly declare their love for these righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted. But it is strange how they desire this outcome and claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, yet they barely know them as they are too busy to study their lives, characters and teachings. How can one truly love a people they do not even know?

In addition, when these people are asked for proof of their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, on Judgment Day what will they say? What will they present? The proof of this declaration is studying and acting on their lives, characters and teachings. A declaration without this evidence will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious as no one understood Islam better than the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did and this was not their attitude. They declared love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and supported their claim through actions by following in his footsteps. This is why they will be with him in the hereafter.

Those who believe love is in the heart and does not require it to be shown through actions is as foolish as the student who hands back a blank exam paper to their teacher claiming that knowledge is in their mind so they do not need to practically write it down on paper and then still expects to pass.

The one who behaves in such a manner does not love the righteous servants of Allah, the Exalted, only their own desires and they have undoubtedly been fooled by the Devil.

Finally, it is important to note that members of other religions also claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to follow in their footsteps and act on their teachings they will certainly not be with them on Judgment Day. This is quite obvious if one ponders over this fact for a moment.

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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