

Life of Uthman Ibn

Affan (RA)

PodBio – Vol 3



Achieve Noble Character

Life of Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

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Table of Contents

[Table of Contents](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Compiler's Notes](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Life of Uthman Ibn Affan \(RA\)](#)

[Life in Mecca Before Accepting Islam](#)

[True Modesty](#)

[Avoiding Blind Imitation](#)

[Key to Evil](#)

[Useful Time](#)

[Importance of Knowledge](#)

[Importance of Earning](#)

[Love of the People](#)

[Life in Mecca After Accepting Islam](#)

[A Man of Truth](#)

[Noble Qualities](#)

[A Beautiful Marriage](#)

[Sublime Character](#)

[Steadfastness](#)

[The Migration to Ethiopia & Medina](#)

[Fulfilling the Rights of the Quran](#)

[Words of Wisdom – 1](#)

[Words of Wisdom – 2](#)

[Words of Wisdom – 3](#)

[Life in Medina During the Lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad \(PBUH\)](#)

[The 1st Year After Migration](#)

[A Beautiful Legacy](#)

[Best Places in the World](#)

[Brotherhood](#)

[The 2nd Year After Migration](#)

[The Battle of Badr](#)

[A Merciful Act](#)

[Best Conduct](#)

[A Blessed Marriage](#)

[A Wise Deal](#)

[The 3rd Year After Migration](#)

[The Battle of Uhud](#)

[Obedience in Difficulties](#)

[When Others Depart](#)

[Being Trustworthy](#)

[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](#)

[Slander of Aisha \(RA\) – Wife of Prophet Muhammad \(PBUH\)](#)

[Letting Things Go](#)

[The Pact of Hudaibiya](#)

[Adhere to the Straight Path](#)

[The Pledge of Ridwan](#)

[Verifying News](#)

[A Clear Victory](#)

[Evil Plots Fail](#)

[The 7th Year After Migration](#)

[The Battle of Khaybar](#)

[Hold Onto Justice](#)

[The Visitation \(Umra\)](#)

[Humility Without Weakness](#)

[The 8th Year After Migration](#)

[The Conquest of Mecca](#)

[Compassion](#)

[The Battle of Hunayn](#)

[Steadfast in Difficulty](#)

[The Siege of Taif](#)

[Leniency and Second Chances](#)

[The 9th Year After Migration](#)

[The Battle of Tabuk](#)

[Useful Wealth](#)

[Prophetic Sermon at Tabuk](#)

[A Comprehensive Advice](#)

[Your Legacy](#)

[Real Modesty](#)

[The 10th Year After Migration](#)

[The Farewell Holy Pilgrimage](#)

[The 11th Year After Migration](#)

[Death of Prophet Muhammad \(PBUH\)](#)

[Devotion to Allah \(SWT\)](#)

[Life After the Death of the Prophet Muhammad \(PBUH\)](#)

[Speech of Abu Bakkar \(RA\)](#)

[Remaining Obedient](#)

[Caliphate of Abu Bakkar \(RA\)](#)

[Supporting the Truth](#)

[A Sincere Advisor](#)

[Spend According to Means](#)

[Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab \(RA\)](#)

[Good Companionship](#)

[The Islamic Calendar](#)

[Noble Behaviour](#)

[The Counsel for the Next Caliph](#)

[Rulership](#)

[Nominating Uthman Ibn Affan \(RA\) as Caliph](#)

[The Next Caliph](#)

[The Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan \(RA\)](#)

[Concentrating on More Relevant Issues](#)

[Seditions](#)

[Equal Treatment](#)

[A Beautiful Sermon – 1](#)

[Advice to Leaders](#)

[Remaining Firm](#)

[A Fine Advice](#)

[Beautiful Advice](#)

[Justice for All](#)

[Consulting Others](#)

[Commanding Good](#)

[Avoiding Darkness](#)

[A Beautiful Sermon – 2](#)

[Words of Wisdom – 4](#)

[Letting things Go](#)

[Criticism and Praise](#)

[Things to Fear](#)

[A Beautiful Sermon – 3](#)

[Taking Revenge](#)

[Making Things Easy](#)

[Best Places on Earth](#)

[The Questions](#)

[A Simple Life](#)

[Concealing Faults](#)

[Concern For Others](#)

[Benefit Yourself](#)

[For The Travelers](#)

[True Muslim and Believer](#)

[Earning Wealth](#)

[Dedication to Work](#)

[Justice](#)

[The Best Human](#)

[Second Call to Prayer](#)

[Sincerity](#)

[Unity](#)

[Reconciliation](#)

[Adhere to True Guidance](#)

[Dealing with Rebels](#)

[Expedition to Cyprus](#)

[Drop and An Ocean](#)

[Leading by Example](#)

[How to Win](#)

[Expedition to North Africa](#)

[Steadfastness](#)

[Free of Greed](#)

[Religious Freedom](#)

[Compiling the Quran](#)

[Being Trustworthy](#)

[Monitoring Others](#)

[Leading Correctly](#)

[Fulfilling Duties Sincerely](#)

[Seditions & Turmoil](#)

[Fear for the Nation](#)

[Warning Against Seditions](#)

[A Beautiful Sermon – 4](#)

[Ignorance](#)

[Weakness of Faith](#)

[Culture vs Religion](#)

[Blind Imitation](#)

[Never Fooled Twice](#)

[Insight](#)

[Forbearance](#)

[Spreading Gossip](#)

[Misusing Knowledge](#)

[Corruption](#)

[Tolerance](#)

[Commanding Evil and Forbidding Good](#)

[Facing Turmoil](#)

[The Steadfast Caliph](#)

[A Fair Hearing](#)

[Good Advisors](#)

[The Siege & Martyrdom of the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan \(RA\)](#)

[Evil Plots](#)

[Helping Others in Good](#)

[Obedience to the Prophet \(PBUH\)](#)

[Using Knowledge](#)

[Pinnacle of Sincerity](#)

[Adopting Patience](#)

[Reasons for Patience](#)

[Advising Others Differently](#)

[No Compromising on Faith](#)

[Urging Unity](#)

[The Caliph's Sacrifice](#)

[Electing Ali Ibn Abu Talib \(RA\) as Caliph](#)

[Further Turmoil](#)

[A Truthful Eulogy](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Over 400 Free eBooks on Good Character](#)

[Other ShaykhPod Media](#)

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Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses some lessons from the Life of the Great Companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the Third Rightly Guided Caliph of Islam, Uthman Ibn Affan, 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 Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

Life in Mecca Before Accepting Islam

True Modesty

Prior to accepting Islam, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was among the best of people. He was of high status, wealthy, elegant in speech and extremely modest. He never committed an immoral act. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 17.

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

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

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

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

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.

Avoiding Blind Imitation

Even prior to the advent of Islam, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, never prostrated to or worshipped an idol. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 17.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, used his common sense and did not blindly follow the people around him in worshipping lifeless idols.

Blind imitation of one's forefathers is a major reason why people reject the truth, such as Judgement Day. A person should utilize their common sense and choose a way of life based on evidence and clear signs and not blindly imitate others like cattle. Behaving in this manner leads to deviation.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate

between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Blind imitation is even disliked within Islam.

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

Key to Evil

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, never drank alcohol, even before accepting Islam. When he was questioned about this, he replied that he observed how alcohol took away a person's intelligence completely. And he had never seen anything which disappeared completely, returning completely. This has been discussed in Ibn Abd Rabbih's, Al Iqad Al Farid, 6/353.

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 angles in a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3380. This includes 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.

Useful Time

Prior to accepting Islam, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, refrained from listening to songs and participating in vain entertaining activities. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 17.

Even if one claims that listening to lawful poetry or songs and participating in vain entertaining activities is lawful, they are still wasting their precious time.

There are many Muslims who dedicate much of their time, effort and wealth on things which are neither righteous deeds nor sins meaning, they are vain things. Vain things can also include acquiring unnecessary things, such as beautifying one's home beyond their necessities. Even though, they might be correct in their claim that they are not committing sins it is important to understand a fact. Namely, time is a precious gift from Allah, the Exalted, which cannot be gained once it departs. All other things can be acquired, such as wealth, all other things except time. So when one dedicates their time as well as other blessings such as wealth to unnecessary and extra things meaning, vain things, it will only lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. This will occur when they observe the reward given to those who made use of their time and performed righteous deeds. Time wasters may have avoided sins which save them from punishment but as they wasted time on vain things they may face criticism.

And they will surely lose out on the reward they could have gained if they utilised their time and other blessings correctly.

In addition, it is important to understand that the more one indulges in vain things the closer they are to falling into extravagance and waste both of which are blame worthy. For example, those who waste blessings are considered the siblings of the Devil. And it can be argued when one dedicates their time to vain things they have in fact wasted the precious blessing of time. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils...”

Importance of Knowledge

Even during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was well versed in knowledge that was available at that time, including lineages, proverbs and the history of important events. During his travels to Syria and Ethiopia, he learnt about the lives of different people, customs and cultures. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 17.

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.

Importance of Earning

During the pre-Islamic days of Ignorance and after accepting Islam, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, took care of the business he inherited from his father and became a successful merchant. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 17.

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.

Love of the People

Before becoming a Muslim, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was loved by all the tribes of Mecca because of his noble character and sincerity to others. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 17-18.

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 themselves.

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

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

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

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

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

Life in Mecca After Accepting Islam

A Man of Truth

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, readily accepted Islam when he was invited to it by Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. He was considered the fourth man to accept Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 18.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, readily accepted Islam as he recognized its truthfulness. He was a man who adopted truthfulness prior to the coming of Islam and therefore accepted its truth when he was presented 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 has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The 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 cherry 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 Qualities

After accepting Islam, the noble qualities of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, only grew and as a result Islam benefited much from his faith. The following description has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 19.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, called others towards Islam in a friendly and patient manner.

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 Alea 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was content with Islam.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was extremely forgiving of others.

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.”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was charitable, compassionate and generous.

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...”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, aided the weak and oppressed.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever relieves the distress of a Muslim Allah, the Exalted, will relieve a hardship from them on the Day of Judgment.

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

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

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

A distress is anything which causes someone to fall into anxiety and difficulty. Therefore, the one who eases such a distress for another whether worldly or religious for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from a hardship on Judgment Day by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in different ways in many Hadiths. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2449, that the one who feeds a hungry Muslim will be fed the fruits of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. And the one who

gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim will be given a drink from Paradise by Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgment.

As the difficulties of the hereafter are much greater than those found in the world this reward is held back for a Muslim until they reach the hereafter.

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.

A Beautiful Marriage

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, proposed marriage to the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with her, which was accepted. It has been said that they were the most beautiful couple a person could ever see. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 20-21.

A father would only desire the best man to wed his daughter, therefore, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wed his daughter to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates his great virtue. One must follow this example and choose a spouse based on the teachings of Islam if they desire a successful marriage.

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.

Sublime Character

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once entered upon his daughter, Ruqayyah, and her husband, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, and urged his daughter to take good care of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as he was the closest to him out of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in his sublime character. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 21.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day will be good character. This includes showing good character towards Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. It also includes showing good character towards people. Unfortunately, many Muslims strive to fulfil the obligatory duties in respect to Allah, the Exalted, but neglect the second aspect by mistreating others. They fail to understand its importance. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, clearly advises that a person will not be a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves. Meaning, the same way a person desires to be treated kindly they must also treat others with good character otherwise they will not succeed as the only truly successful people are the believers.

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

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

Steadfastness

Just like the rest of the Companions, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, was verbally and physically persecuted by the non-Muslims of Mecca for accepting Islam. His uncle caught him and chained him up and violently threatened him to renounce Islam. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, remained steadfast and his faith did not waver in the slightest. When his uncle observed his steadfastness, he let him go. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 22-23.

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 than 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 Migration to Ethiopia & Medina

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, including Uthman Ibn Affan and his wife, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with them, departed leaving behind their families, businesses and homes all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Sometime later, they heard that the people of Mecca accepted Islam. Some of them returned to Mecca, including Uthman and his wife, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with them, but then they realized the news was false. They remained in Mecca until they were eventually commanded to migrate to Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, *The Life of the Prophet*, Volume 2, Pages 1-2 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 22-26.

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, this event which discusses the migration of some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to Ethiopia.

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.

Fulfilling the Rights of the Quran

Like all the Companions, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, was deeply attached to the Holy Quran and strove hard to fulfill its rights. This involved studying ten verses of the Holy Quran at a time and applying their teachings within his life before moving onto the next verses.

His deep attachment to the Holy Quran are reflected in his statements regarding it. For example, he once said that if the spiritual hearts were pure, they would never have their fill of the Holy Quran. On another occasion, he commented that he disliked a day passing without him looking into the Holy Quran. Reciting the Holy Quran was one of the three dearest things to him. He once advised that reciting the Holy Quran was a virtue and acting on it was a duty.

He was also one of the scribes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who would write down the verses of the Holy Quran as they descended.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, memorized the entire Holy Quran during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah, the Exalted, blessed him in such a way that he would recite the entire Holy Quran in a single cycle of prayer. This has been

discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 27-28 & 30.

It is a shame many Muslims nowadays consider someone who memorized the Holy Quran as the one who has memorized its words, irrespective of if they understand and act on its teachings. This type of person was not considered someone who had memorized the Holy Quran in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Truly memorizing it involves fulfilling its rights.

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.

Words of Wisdom – 1

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that three things were dearest to him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 28.

The first thing which was dear to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was feeding the hungry.

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.

The second thing which was dear to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was clothing the naked.

Generally speaking, 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.

The final thing which was dear to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was reciting the Holy Quran.

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.

Words of Wisdom – 2

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised some virtues and duties. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 29.

The first thing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said was that mixing with righteous people is a virtue and following their example is a duty.

This indicates the importance of good companionship.

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 second thing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said was that reciting the Holy Quran is a virtue and acting on it is a duty.

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.

The third thing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said was that visiting the graves is a virtue and preparing for death is a duty.

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.

The next thing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said was that visiting a sick person is a virtue and asking them to make a will is a duty.

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.”

Words of Wisdom – 3

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once warned about some things which can lead to wasting of good. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 29.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned that the scholar whom no one learns from and knowledge that is not acted upon is a waste of good.

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

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

example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective.

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

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

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

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that sound advice which is not accepted is a waste of good.

Pride can cause one to behave in this manner.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that a Mosque which is not prayed in, is a waste of good.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that a copy of the Holy Quran which is not read from, is a waste of good.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that wealth that is not spent in good ways, is a waste of good.

In reality, this applies to all blessings.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that knowledge of ascetism while pursuing worldly luxuries is a waste of good.

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 themselves 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that having a long life while failing to prepare for the Day of Judgement is a waste of good.

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.

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

The 1st Year After Migration

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

Best Places in the World

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 Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, made no improvements to it during his Caliphate. But during his Caliphate Umar Ibn Khattab, 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 Ibn Affan, 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. He was putting 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.

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 Uthman Ibn Affan and Aws Ibn Thabit, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 39.

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...”

The 2nd Year After Migration

The Battle of Badr

A Merciful Act

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, 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. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 305.

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.

Best Conduct

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. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed Medina in order to raid a caravan belonging to the non-Muslims of Mecca, which eventually unintentionally led to the Battle of Badr, he ordered his son-in-law Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, to stay in Medina and nurse his wife, the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with her, as she was severely sick and eventually passed away from this sickness. On his return to Medina the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, a share of the war booty thereby clearly indicating that he was considered a participant of the Battle of Badr. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 315.

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 they commit sins they should be warned in a gentle manner and still be aided in matters which are good as this kindness is more effective in bringing them back to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, than treating them harshly.

A Blessed Marriage

After the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the wife of Uthman Ibn Affan, Ruqayyah, may Allah be pleased with them, died, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, arranged the marriage of his other daughter, Umm Kulthoom to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them. After the marriage, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, questioned his daughter about Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, she referred to him as the best of husbands. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 54-55.

According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 110, it was Allah, the Exalted, Who commanded for Uthman to marry Umm Kulthoom, may Allah be pleased with them.

The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wed two of his daughters, one after the other, to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates his great virtue. His marriage to two daughters of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the reason he was called, Dhun-Noorayn, meaning, the possessor of two lights.

Muslims must strive to acquire the correct spouse by choosing one based on the teachings 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.

A Wise Deal

When the Muslims migrated to Medina the only water which was suitable for drinking was the well of Roomah, which belonged to a Jew who would charge people for using it. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, urged someone to buy it and donate it to the people of Medina in exchange for something better in Paradise. Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, bought it for 20,000 silver coins and donated it to the people of Medina. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 57-58 and in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, Number 3703.

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

The aim of this Hadith is to encourage one to become generous and avoid being stingy. It is important to note that spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, does not only involve the obligatory charity but it also includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their family as this has been commanded by Islam. Anyone who fails to spend on these elements deserves for their wealth to be destroyed as they have failed to fulfil its purpose which in reality makes wealth useless. It is important to note, spending for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never leads to an overall loss as a person is compensated one way or another. In fact the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

has guaranteed that charity does not decrease one's wealth in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

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

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

Finally, it is important to note that this Hadith applies to all blessings one possesses, such as their good health, not just wealth. So if one fails to dedicate and expend their blessings in the correct way as commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the supplication against their blessing by the Angel maybe accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to correctly use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam so that they receive more which in reality is true gratitude. Otherwise, they may well lose the blessing forever. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

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

The 3rd Year After Migration

The Battle of Uhud

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, including Uthman Ibn Affan, 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 they 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.

When Others Depart

The six year old son of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, who was also the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, died. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 55.

A few years later, Umm Kulthoom, the wife of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, and the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also died. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commented that if he had another single daughter, he would have wed her also to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 56.

In another Hadith, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that if he had forty daughters, he would marry them to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, one after the other, until none of them remained. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 163.

Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

Being Trustworthy

Whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, departed from Medina he always appointed someone trustworthy in charge to manage its affairs until he returned. For example, in the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, he left for an expedition known as Dhu Amarr and appointed Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 1.

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 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 soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself 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 themselves 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.""

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

Adhere to the Straight Path

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, dispatched Uthman Ibn 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 granted permission to circumambulate the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba but he replied that he could never do that before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did so. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 227.

This is an important characteristic to adopt meaning, adhering strictly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of doing things beyond these two sources of guidance.

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

If Muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered 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.

The Pledge of Ridwan

Verifying News

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, dispatched Uthman Ibn 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. After this pledge the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, received news that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was in fact alive and he eventually returned to their camp. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 228 and in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4066.

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

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

Even though, this verse indicates a wicked person spreading news it can still apply to all people which share information with others. As mentioned in this verse a person may believe they are helping others but by spreading unverified information they might harm others instead, such as emotional

harm. Unfortunately, many Muslims are heedless to this and have a habit of simply forwarding information through text messages and social media applications without verifying it. In cases where the information is connected to religious matters it is even more important to verify the information before spreading it. As one may get punished for the actions of others based on the incorrect information they provided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351.

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

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

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 themselves 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. Their 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

Hold Onto Justice

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. The non-Muslims of Khaybar took refuge in one of their forts and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, took control of their farmlands. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to expel them from his territory they struck a deal with him. They would take care of the farmlands and hand over half the harvest to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on the condition that they were not to be expelled from the land. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, agreed but added the clause that the Muslims could expel them in the future if they decided to. He then deputized a Companion, Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, to visit them each year and take their payment. These non-Muslims tried to bribe Abdullah Bin Rawaha, may Allah be pleased with him, so that he would allow them to keep more than the half which was

agreed upon. He replied that even though no one on Earth was more dearer to him than the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and they, the non-Muslims, were most disliked by him, he would not let the love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, nor his dislike for them prevent him from treating them fairly and doing justice. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 270-271.

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 themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of

Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. 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.

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 themselves if necessary nor does their humility cause them to appear disgraced and dishonored.

The 8th Year After Migration

The Conquest of Mecca

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 out of 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. But when the Muslim army entered Mecca one of these men fled to

Uthman Ibn 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 because of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 402.

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. 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.

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 than 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.”

The 9th Year After Migration

The Battle of Tabuk

Useful Wealth

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, urged people to donate towards the expedition. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, assisted according to their strength and did not hold back in the least. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3701, discusses when Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, donated 1000 gold coins. He poured them in the lap of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who commented that from then on nothing could harm his faith. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Page 3.

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.

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.

Your Legacy

As the numbers of Muslims increased, the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, became too small to accommodate them all. Therefore, he urged the people to purchase the neighboring land and expand it and promised a better return in Paradise. Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, purchased this land for around 20,000 silver coins. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 58-59 and in a Hadith found in *Jami At Tirmidhi*, Number 3703.

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

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

Real Modesty

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6209, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that because of the modesty of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, the Angels were shy of him.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also stated that the most sincere in shyness and modesty from his nation was Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 154.

Even when Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was within the privacy of his own home and the doors were locked he would not completely take off his robe when washing himself and he would sit down when having a bath as he was shy before Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Imam Al Asfahani's, Hilyat Al Awliya, Number 111.

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

This Hadith proves that modesty is something which extends beyond one's clothing. It is something which encompasses every aspect of one's life. Protecting the head includes guarding the tongue, eyes, ears and even the thoughts from sins and vain things. Even though, one may hide what they say and what they see from others but they cannot hide these things from Allah, the Exalted. So protecting these parts of the body is a sign of true modesty.

Guarding the stomach means one should avoid unlawful wealth and food. This will lead to the rejection of one's good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

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

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

The one who behaves in this manner according to the teachings of Islam will find that they adequately prepare for the hereafter and have plenty of time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of the world moderately.

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.

The 11th Year After Migration

Death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Devotion to Allah (SWT)

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.

Caliphate of Abu Bakkar (RA)

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.

During the final illness of Abu Bakkar, the Companions, including Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, repeated this blessed attitude when they all advised Abu Bakkar that Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, should be the next Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 74.

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.

A Sincere Advisor

During the Caliphates of Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, was considered a senior advisor to them both. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 73-74.

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.

Spend According to Means

A serious drought occurred during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. During this period a hundred camels carrying foodstuff belonging to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, entered Medina. The merchants came to him in order to trade with him. When they made their offers, he responded that he had received a better offer for his merchandise. He stated that Allah, the Exalted, was offering him a minimum of ten times profit and then donated all of the foodstuff to the poor Muslims. After this, Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a dream while he seemed to be in a hurry. When questioned about this, he responded that Allah, the Exalted, had accepted the charity of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and had given him a bride in Paradise in return and he was hastening to the wedding. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 74-75.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated that the one who spends in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will be rewarded according to what they give. And he warned not to hoard otherwise Allah, the Exalted, will withhold His blessings.

It is important to note, that one must only obtain and spend lawful wealth as any righteous deed which has a foundation in the unlawful will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's intention. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

In addition, this spending is not only through charity but includes spending on one's own necessities and the necessities of their dependents according to the teachings of Islam without waste, excessiveness or extravagance. This is in fact a righteous deed according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4006. A Muslim should spend in a balanced way whereby they help others without becoming needy themselves. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 29:

“And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent.”

A Muslim should donate regularly according to their means even if it is a little as Allah, the Exalted, observes one's quality meaning, their sincerity, not the quantity of a deed. Regularly donating a little is far better and more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than donating a larger amount once in a while. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6465.

It is important to note, as mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion when one gives according to their means Allah, the Exalted, will reward them according to His infinite status. But the one who holds back will find a similar response from Allah, the Exalted. If a Muslim hoards their wealth they will leave it behind for others to enjoy while they are held accountable for it. If they misuse their wealth it will become a curse and burden for them in this world and a punishment in the next.

Caliphate of Umar Ibn Khattab (RA)

Good Companionship

During his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, kept Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, as a close advisor. The people would often go through Uthman in order to approach Umar, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 77.

This indicates the importance of good companionship.

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 Islamic Calendar

During his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, once 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.

It was Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, who suggested that the Islamic calendar should begin with the month of Muharram. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 79.

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 themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

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 themselves 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.

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, the Caliph, Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, decided not to divide the newly-conquered lands amongst the soldiers. He initially faced some resistance from some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who then eventually agreed to his plan. Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of those who agreed with him from the onset.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, 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 and in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 79.

Generally speaking, it is important for Muslims to understand that when they treat others kindly it in reality, benefits themselves and not others. This

is because treating others kindly has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, and fulfilling this important duty gains one reward.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Counsel for the Next Caliph

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 themselves.

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

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

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

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins

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

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

Nominating Uthman Ibn Affan (RA) as Caliph

The Next Caliph

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

The Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

Concentrating on More Relevant Issues

The nomination of Abu Bakkar, Umar Ibn Khattab and Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, as the first three Caliphs of Islam has always been a topic of much debate. Rightly guided scholars have often abundantly discussed the overwhelming evidence of their rights to be the first three Caliphs 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.

Finally, it is foolishness to criticize the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and slander their pious personalities as they are the ones' Allah, the Exalted, chose to carry forward the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, meaning, Allah, the Exalted, safeguarded these two sources of guidance through them. Chapter 15 Al Hiji, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

Therefore, if one criticizes them they are casting doubts on the authenticity of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is an extremely dangerous thing to do.

Seditions

The signs of seditions began to show in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but became apparent and influential towards the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him.

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 Bin 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.

Many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6934, discuss these rebels. These rebels challenged the leadership of Uthman Ibn Affan and later on, the leadership of Ali Bin Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with them. This Hadith, like many others, indicates that the rebels in most cases were devoted worshippers of Allah, the Exalted, but the thing which caused them to deviate from the true teachings of Islam was their ignorance. They foolishly gave worship more value than gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. Their ignorance caused them to misinterpret the teachings of Islam which led to their heinous sins. If they possessed true knowledge this would not have happened.

It is important for Muslims to understand how knowledge can prevent sins especially, towards others, such as domestic abuse. One only refrains from wronging others when they fear the consequences of their actions meaning, being held accountable and punished by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. But the foundation and root of fear of the consequences of one's actions is knowledge. Without knowledge one will never fear the consequences of their actions. This will allow their ignorance to encourage them towards committing sins and wronging others.

If society desires to reduce the cases of domestic abuse and other crimes against people they must give priority to gaining and acting on knowledge as worship alone will not cause this to happen just like it did not prevent the rebels from deviating from Islam and causing great distress for innocent people. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

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

Equal Treatment

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, his son, Ubaydullah attacked and killed three people who he strongly believed were involved in the murder of his father: the daughter of the killer, Abu Luluah, Jufaynah (a Christian man) and Al Hormuzan, the former Persian commander who accepted Islam after he was caught and brought to Medina during the Caliphate of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. On his deathbed, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, had his son imprisoned and allowed the next Caliph to deal with him. Even though there is some evidence that these people conspired together yet the proof was not clear. For example, they were seen conversing secretly together before the murder and the double-edged dagger which was used in the attack was seen in each of their hands at some point by eye witnesses. Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, did not let Ubaydullah off just because he was the son of the former Caliph. So he handed him over to the son of Al Hormuzan, Al Qamadhban, for the legal judgment of equal retaliation but Al Qamadhban forgave him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 215-216.

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 – 1

Uthman Ibn Affan, 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, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 117-118.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people that he was a follower and not an innovator.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people he would sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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, [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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, told the people he would sincerely obey and follow the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the example of his predecessors in their rulings based on independent reasoning.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded the people that the material world was tempting. They should not be content with it and should not put their trust in it.

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.

Advice to Leaders

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once wrote to his governors with the following advice, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 118-119.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded them they were appointed as shepherds over the people and not money-collectors. If they became money-collectors then they would stop being modest, trustworthy and honest. They should only take what was due from people and place it in the correct place with sincerity.

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.

Remaining Firm

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to the commanders of the soldiers with the following advice, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 120.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned them not to change their good intention, which they showed during the Caliphates of Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. He warned them that if they changed their intention then Allah, the Exalted, would replace them with others. And he added that he would try his best to fulfil his role as Caliph.

This indicates the importance of remaining steadfast.

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

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to

Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A Muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

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 themselves 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 Fine Advice

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote and gave some advice to his employees who collected the obligatory charity. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 121-122.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded them that Allah, the Exalted, only accepts the truth and therefore they must take the obligatory charity and give people their rights with honesty.

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

It is important to note, that truthfulness has three levels. The first is when one is truthful in their intention and sincerity. Meaning, they act only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and do not benefit others for an ulterior motive, such as fame. This in fact is the foundation of Islam as every action is judged on one's intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded them to fulfill their trusts.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also reminded them not to wrong others, especially, the orphans or non-Muslims who had a treaty with the Muslims, for Allah, the Exalted, will be the opponent of the one who wrongs them.

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.

Beautiful Advice

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, gave the following advice to the general masses, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 122.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded the people that all the success they were granted by Allah, the Exalted, was due to their strict adherence to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, they must not let worldly affairs distract them from what is important.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural

practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Justice for All

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would make it clear that no one was above the law set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He once commented that if the people find that according to the Holy Quran he should be locked up, then they should lock him up. Even when he was wrongfully criticized for certain choices he was always ready to hear the complaints and addressed them without any signs of anger or frustration. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 126 & 128.

In addition, he once had his governor, who was his half-brother, Waleed Ibn Uqbah, may Allah be pleased with him, physically punished when some people falsely testified that he had drunk alcohol and as a result he was dismissed from his role. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 357-358.

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.

Consulting Others

Uthman Ibn Affan, like his predecessors before him, may Allah be pleased with them, would always consult the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, before making important decisions. For example, he once told his governors and commanders to seek his permission before making any significant decisions and he would in turn consult the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, before making a final decision. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 127.

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...”

Commanding Good

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would urge the people to fulfil their duty of commanding good and forbidding evil. He reminded them that he would support those considered weak on what is right. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 128.

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 themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Avoiding Darkness

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would be very strict with himself when it came to fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. He always avoided harming others, as he knew the consequences of this was severe. He once grew angry with his servant and twisted his ear. The next day he summoned the servant and insisted the he twist his ear back in retaliation. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 129.

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

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

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed

by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaaffin, verse 14:

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

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

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

A Beautiful Sermon – 2

Uthman Ibn Affan, 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, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 132.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, as it is a great treasure.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that the smartest person was the one who controlled himself and worked hard for what comes after death.

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.”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that the smartest person was the one who gained light from the light of Allah, the Exalted, (the Holy Quran) to illuminate their grave.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people to fear being resurrected blind on the Day of Judgement even though they had the ability to see in this world.

This is connected to chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, one must remain firm on the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, in order to avoid having a depressed life in this world and being resurrected blind in the next.

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."

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded the people that whoever has Allah, the Exalted, with them, does not need to fear anything. But the one who has Allah, the Exalted, against them cannot win.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

Words of Wisdom – 4

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that concern with this material world is a darkness in the spiritual heart. But concern for the hereafter is a light in the spiritual heart. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 133.

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.

Letting things Go

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that he sought the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, for his mistakes and had forgiven those who had wronged him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 133.

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.”

Criticism and Praise

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once commented that the thing which undermines Islam are those who unconstructively criticize others. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 134.

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.

Things to Fear

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once advised that the believer fears the following things. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 134.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a believer fears losing their faith.

Even though there is no doubt that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite and can overcome all sins. And giving up hope in the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is defined as unbelief in chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 87:

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

Yet, none the less it is extremely important for Muslims to understand a fact. Namely, a Muslim has not been guaranteed to leave this world with their faith meaning, a Muslim is in danger of dying as a non-Muslim. This is the greatest loss. If this happens it does not take a scholar to conclude

where this person will reside in the hereafter. This can occur when a Muslim persists on sins especially, major sins, such as drinking alcohol and failing to offer their obligatory prayers and reaches their end without sincerely repenting from their sins. This is the reason why Muslims must sincerely repent from all their sins and strive to fulfil all their obligatory duties as this is a task they can undoubtedly fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

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

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a believer fears that the recording Angels will write something down which will disgrace them on the Day of Judgement.

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.”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a believer fears that the Devil will destroy their good deeds.

One must avoid the characteristics which can lead to this, such as envy. This requires one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge to achieve this.

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 themselves 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised that a believer fears that the material world will tempt them away from the hereafter so that they fail preparing for it.

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.

A Beautiful Sermon – 3

Uthman Ibn Affan, 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, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 139-140.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, reminded the people that they were living in a transient realm which they would soon be leaving. Therefore, they must hasten to do what is best before death arrives, as it may arrive at any time.

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 themselves. 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned the people that the material world was very deceiving so they should not let their present life

deceive them nor let the chief deceiver (the Devil) deceive them regarding Allah, the Exalted.

One of the main deceptions of the Devil is convincing people to adopt wishful thinking in respect to Allah, the Exalted, while fooling them into believing they possess hope in Him.

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.”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people to learn from those who had passed away so that they avoid heedlessness. The former people tilled the soil and populated the land and enjoyed life but eventually they all departed to face the consequences of their actions.

It is important for a Muslim to be observant in their daily life and avoid being too self-absorbed in their own worldly matters so that they become heedless over the things which are occurring around them and the things which have already occurred. This is an important quality to possess as it is an excellent way to strengthen one's faith which in turn helps one to remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. For example, when a Muslim observes a sick person they should not only aid them by whatever means they possess, even if it is only a supplication, but they should reflect on their own health and understand that they too will eventually lose their good health either by an illness, ageing or even death. This should inspire them to be grateful for their good health and show this through their actions by taking advantage of their good health in both worldly and religious matters which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

When they observe the death of a rich person they should not only feel sad for the deceased and their family but realise that one day which is unknown to them they will die also. They should understand that just like the rich person was abandoned by their wealth, fame and family at their grave so will they too be left only with their deeds in their grave. This will encourage them to prepare for their grave and the hereafter.

This attitude can and should be applied to all things one observes. A Muslim should learn a lesson from everything around them which has been advised in the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

"...and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

Those who behave in this manner will strengthen their faith on a daily basis whereas those who are too self-absorbed in their worldly life will remain heedless which may lead them to their destruction.

Taking Revenge

Once a man entered the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with a weapon. When he was apprehended and questioned by Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, the man responded he intended to kill him as his governor in Yemen had wronged him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, rebuked him and told him he should have complained to him about the governor instead. When the man's tribe guaranteed he would not enter Medina again as long as Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was Caliph, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, let the man go, even though he was advised to punish the man. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 147-148.

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.

Making Things Easy

Even in elderly age, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would fetch water for his ablution at night time himself. When he was advised to wake up his servant to get it for him, he would reply that the night was his time to rest. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 149.

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

One aspect of this mercy is for a Muslim not to demand their full rights from others. Instead, they should use the means such as their physical or financial strength to help themselves and make things easy for others. In some cases, when a Muslim demands their full rights from others and they fail to fulfil them it may lead to their punishment. In order to be merciful to others they should therefore only demand their rights in some cases. This does not mean a Muslim should not strive to fulfil the rights of others but it means they should try to overlook and excuse the people they have rights over. For example, a parent can excuse their adult child from a particular house chore and do it themselves if they possess the means to do so without

troubling themselves, especially if they child returns home from work exhausted. This leniency and mercy will not only cause Allah, the Exalted, to be more merciful to them but it will also increase the love and respect people have for them. The one who always demands their full rights is not a sinner but they will lose out on this reward and outcome if they behave in this manner.

Muslims should make things easy for others and hope Allah, the Exalted, will make things easy for them in this world and in the next.

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 Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him, made no improvements to it during his Caliphate. But during his Caliphate, Umar Ibn Khattab, 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 Ibn Affan, 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. He was putting 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.

Umar Ibn Khattab, 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, followed in his footsteps by expanding the Masjid Al Haram in Mecca and surrounded the land with a low wall. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 199-200.

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.

The Questions

Whenever Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would stand by a grave he would weep profusely. When questioned about this he would respond that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once commented that the grave is the first stage of the hereafter. If a person is safe at this stage, what comes after it will be easier than it but if the person is not safe at this stage, then what comes after it will be harder than it. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, would also mention that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would say that he had not seen a scene more horrible than the scene of the grave. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4267.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3120, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that each person will be asked three questions in the grave.

The first question will be who is your Lord? In order to answer this question correctly a Muslim must not only believe in Allah, the Exalted, but prove this belief through actions. This is only achieved by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing His decrees with patience. It is this very proof which will support a Muslim in their grave when they encounter this question. It is important to note, that even some non-Muslims believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet they will fail to answer this question correctly as they did not obey Him correctly during their lives. If

only believing in Him was enough then these non-Muslims would succeed in this question. But it is quite evident they will not succeed.

The next question will be what is your religion? If a Muslim desires to answer this correctly they must not only believe in Islam but practically implement its teachings in their everyday life. This involves sincerely striving to obtain and act on its teachings. It is the reason gaining useful knowledge has been made a duty on all Muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

The final question according to this Hadith will be who is your Prophet? It is important to note, that even some of the past nations believed in their Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they did not follow in their footsteps correctly they will fail in answering this question correctly. If a Muslim desires to answer this question correctly they must not only verbally declare their belief in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but actively learn and act on his traditions. This is the very purpose of sending Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, meaning, to practically follow them. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

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

The mercy, love and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which will help a Muslim answer this question correctly is only possible to obtain through this method. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.""

A Simple Life

Despite being a successful merchant, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would lead a simple life, like his predecessors before him, and would always use his wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, in support of the needy and poor. His wealth was in his hands, not in his heart.

Islam teaches Muslims that every blessing they possess, such as wealth or children, should be contained in their hand not their heart. An excellent way of achieving this is that each blessing should be used according to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, not one's own desire. For example, one should strive to only spend their wealth on things commanded and recommended by Islam, such as a person's own necessities and on the necessities of their dependents while avoiding waste, extravagance and excessiveness. This attitude will prevent one from becoming attached to the blessing meaning, it will ensure the blessing remains in their hands instead of their heart. This is an important concept to understand and act on as it prevents one from becoming too attached to the blessing. As each worldly blessing is bound to pass away this attitude will prevent one from becoming overly sad meaning, becoming grieved and depressed when it eventually does. Keeping the blessing in one's hand might lead to sadness when one eventually lose it but this sadness is acceptable in Islam and does not lead to impatience and mental disorders, such as depression, which severe sadness namely, grief, leads to.

In addition, this attitude prevents one from misusing the blessing which often occurs when it is within one's heart instead of their hands. For example, unnecessarily hoarding wealth and greedily amassing more. This concept has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23:

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

Keeping things in one's hand instead of their heart will ensure they always remember that the blessing belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and not them. This again prevents impatience when one eventually loses it. This has been indicated in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.”

So a Muslim must strive to use each blessing according to the teachings of Islam thereby, ensuring it remains in their hands instead of their heart which in fact should contain only the love of Allah, the Exalted.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, would often be seen sleeping on the floor of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, wrapped in a blanket with no guards around him. He would offer the people fine food and return home to eat vinegar and olive oil. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 159-160.

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.

Concealing Faults

On one occasion, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was called to catch some Muslims engaging in a sinful activity. But by the time he arrived, the people had dispersed. He set a slave free out of gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, that no Muslim had been caught and shamed through his hands. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 160.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, responded to the situation instead of ignoring it as that was his duty. But at the same time he loved when the people's faults were concealed from the public so that they would not be publicly shamed.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim will have their faults concealed by Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. This is quite evident if one ponders over it. The people who are accustomed to exposing the faults of others are the ones whose faults are made public by Allah, the Exalted. But the one who conceals the faults of others is considered by society as someone who has no obvious faults.

There are two types of people in respect to this advice. The first are those whose wrong actions are private meaning, this person does not commit sins openly nor exposes their sins in a boastful manner to others. If this person slips up and commits a sin which becomes known to others it should be veiled as long as this does not cause harm to others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 19:

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

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

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

Concern For Others

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would always strive to find out about the people's affairs so that he could aid them. He would even ask about the people when sitting on the pulpit of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 161.

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 themselves is lower in rank than an animal as even they care about their offspring. In fact, a Muslim should be better than animals by practically caring for others beyond their own family.

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.

Benefit Yourself

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, would make free food available for the devoted worshipper, the traveler and the poor during the Holy month of Ramadan in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This act encouraged people to fulfil the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of spiritual seclusion in a Mosque for the last ten days of Ramadan. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 180.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For The Travelers

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, designated some houses as inns where strangers, who had no place to stay, could come and stay. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 180-181.

This is connected to chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"They ask you what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for...the traveler. And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allāh is Knowing of it.""

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.

True Muslim and Believer

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, ensured the non-Muslims under the Islamic rule were treated with respect and their lives, wealth and families were protected from harm. For example, he commanded his governor in Iraq to adhere strictly to the conditions of their peace treaty and even reduced the tax (Jizya) that was imposed on them to make things easier. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 188-189.

The governor of Egypt, Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, was forced to recapture Alexandria after the Romans launched an attack to take it back with some of the locals who had broken their peace treaties with the Muslims. After he was granted victory, the locals who did not break their peace treaties complained to him that the Roman soldiers had seized their properties which were now in the hands of the Muslim soldiers. As they did not break their treaty of peace with the Muslims, Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, restored all their properties to them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 190.

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.

Earning Wealth

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, allocated many lands to people which were either barren or abandoned by their previous owners. He encouraged them to cultivate the land, which increased the revenue of the land and benefited the entire society, through the obligatory charity and trade. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 193-194.

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.

Dedication to Work

As Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was a successful merchant, he did not take a salary from the public treasury, even though he was entitled to it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 197.

This highlights his sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, as he served the Muslims solely for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted.

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

Justice

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was very generous and would strive to uphold his ties of kinship by sharing his personal wealth with them. Some falsely accused him of giving to his relatives from the public treasury. This was obviously false as he would often comment that the wealth from the public treasury was not lawful for him to distribute in that manner and neither would the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, allow him to behave in such a manner even if he desired to do that. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 205-206.

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 themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. 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.

The Best Human

A man once came to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and asked him whether Allah, the Exalted would accept his repentance after he committed a major sin. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, recited chapter 40 Ghafir, verses 1-3, to him:

“Hā, Meem. The revelation of the Book [i.e., 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.”

Then he told the man to do good deeds and not to despair. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee’s, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 220.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds which has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Second Call to Prayer

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, stressed the importance of following him and the way of his rightly-guided Caliphs. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4607. There is a consensus amongst the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the scholars after them that Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of the rightly-guided Caliphs.

During his Caliphate, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, introduced a second call to prayer to the Friday congregational prayer, as the Muslims increased in size. This allowed them ample time to respond to the Friday prayer as the newly-introduced call to prayer was given earlier than the traditional one, which is given right before the sermon begins. This was done after consulting the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who agreed with him as there was a genuine benefit in introducing it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 227-228.

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.

Sincerity

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, offered the complete prayers while travelling to Mecca as he regarded himself as a resident of Mecca and not a traveler. Whereas, some other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, disagreed with him, yet followed his lead, as they disliked to cause disunity over minor issues which were open to debate. In this case, reducing the prayers while travelling is not obligatory, according to some scholars, it is only recommended. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 224-225.

Their behaviour showed both sincerity to their leader and the importance of unifying on issues which are good and lawful.

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.

Unity

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, offered the complete prayers while travelling to Mecca as he regarded himself as a resident of Mecca and not a traveler. Whereas, some other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, disagreed with him, yet followed his lead, as they disliked to cause disunity over minor issues which were open to debate. In this case, reducing the prayers while travelling is not obligatory, according to some scholars, it is only recommended. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 224-225.

Their behaviour showed both sincerity to their leader and the importance of unifying on issues which are good and lawful.

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 themselves. An envious Muslim

should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

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 themselves 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.

Reconciliation

Two Muslim armies, one from Syria and the other from Iraq, once fell into a dispute as to who would be their overall leader. This dispute nearly resulted in violence but the Companions, such as Hudhayfah Ibn Yaman, may Allah be pleased with them, who were present spoke to both sides and reconciled between them thereby averting bloodshed. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 255.

This is connected to 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 this verse Allah, the exalted, explains how people should conduct themselves when conversing with others so that they derive benefit for themselves and others. The first is that when Muslims gather they should discuss how to benefit others which encompasses charity in the form of wealth and physical aid. If a Muslim is not in a position to help a needy person then this is an excellent way of gaining reward equal to actually helping them. A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6800, advises that the one who inspires someone else towards good will be rewarded as if they performed the good action themselves. If one cannot

aid someone in difficulty or inspire another to fulfill this task they can at least encourage others to supplicate for the one in need. Supplication for an absent person causes the Angels to pray for the supplicator. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 1534. This mentality can inspire the group to visit the needy person which provides them with emotional support. This has a powerful psychological impact and provides them with a new mode of strength when dealing with their hardship. The important thing to note is that when one mentions the situation of a needy person their intention must be to aid them in their hour of need. It should never be for the sake of passing time and making them a target of ridicule.

The second way to gain blessings is when one converses about anything lawful that will provide benefit to someone in this world or the next. This aspect includes advising others to do good and refrain from evil in every aspect of their life.

The third aspect mentioned in this verse involves conversing with others with a constructive mindset which brings people together in a positive way instead of possessing a destructive mindset which causes divisions within society. If a person cannot bring people together in a loving way then the minimum they can do is not cause divisions amongst them. Even this is recorded as a good deed when done for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2518.

In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4919, advises that reconciling between two opposing Muslims for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, is superior to voluntary prayer and fasting. Every good thing

found within society was the outcome of this pious attitude such as the construction of schools, hospitals and Mosques.

But it is important to note, that a Muslim will only obtain the great reward mentioned in this verse when they perform the righteous deeds for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Each person will be rewarded based on their intention not just their physical action. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. The insincere Muslim will find that on Judgment Day they will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Adhere to True Guidance

One of the generals of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, named Ibn Aamir, may Allah have mercy on him, was granted many victories. As a token of gratitude he entered the state of a pilgrim from Khorasan in Iran and left to perform the Visitation (Umra). When Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, heard what he did, he criticized him and commented that he should have entered the state of a pilgrim at the border of the sacred land in Mecca, as this was the usual practice set by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 260.

This indicates the importance of adhering to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoiding innovating unnecessary practices.

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.

Dealing with Rebels

After the martyrdom of Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, some of the non-Muslims living in lands controlled by the Muslims rebelled and broke their peace treaties with the Muslims. Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, swiftly dealt with them and quashed their acts of rebellion. After they were overpowered by the Muslims, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, did not punish them and instead renegotiated peace treaties with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 261-262.

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.

Expedition to Cyprus

Drop and An Ocean

Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, who was the governor of Syria, feared the Romans would attack the city of Homs, as it was close to their territory. He urged the Caliph, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, for permission to strive against the Romans at Cyprus by sea in order to protect Homs, but Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, disliked the notion of sea travel. When Uthman became Caliph, Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with them, urged him to grant him permission. He granted him permission but commanded him not to force the soldiers to go with him and instead offer them the option, as many people at that time did not like travelling by sea. A huge army volunteered to join Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, on his expedition. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 272-275.

Even though the world had opened up to the Muslims, yet these soldiers still volunteered to join him on this expedition as their focus was on striving for the hereafter and not enjoying the luxuries of the material world.

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.

Leading by Example

Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan appointed Abdullah Ibn Qays, may Allah be pleased with them, in charge of the navy. He led at least fifty campaigns by sea. He strived hard to keep his soldiers safe and instead of sending a soldier as a scout into enemy territory, he would go himself. On one of his scouting missions in Roman territory he was discovered, attacked and martyred. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 277-278.

One of the fine characteristics he possessed was leading 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 himself and prohibited evil yet acted on it himself 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 themselves 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.

How to Win

During the expedition and victory in Cyprus, Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, observed the prisoners of war and wept. When he was questioned about his weeping he replied that these people had power and control but when they persisted in disobeying Allah, the Exalted, they were humiliated and disgraced. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 280-281.

It is important for Muslims to understand a simple yet profound lesson namely, they will never succeed in this world or the next in worldly or religious matters through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Since the dawn of time to this age and till the end of time no person has ever achieved true success nor will they ever through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite obvious when one turns the pages of history. Therefore, when a Muslim is in a situation which they desire to achieve a positive and successful outcome from they should never choose to disobey Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of how tempting or easy it may seem to be. Even if one is advised by their close friends and relatives to do so as there is no obedience to the creation if it means disobedience to the Creator. And in truth they will never be able to protect them from Allah, the Exalted, and His punishment in either this world or the next. The same way Allah, the Exalted, grants success to those who obey Him He removes a successful outcome from those who disobey Him even if this removal takes time to witness. A Muslim should not be fooled as this will occur sooner or later. The Holy Quran has made it extremely clear that an evil plan or action only encompasses the doer even if this punishment is delayed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“...but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people...”

Therefore, no matter how difficult the situation and choice Muslims should always choose the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both worldly and religious matters as this alone will lead to true success in both worlds even if this success is not obvious immediately.

Expedition to North Africa

Steadfastness

During the expedition to North Africa, a Muslim army faced an army 8-10 times its size. When the Muslim soldiers were completely surrounded by the enemy soldiers, Abdullah Ibn Az Zubair, may Allah be pleased with him, was granted permission to lead a charge against the enemy king, which resulted in the king being killed. When the enemy army saw this they panicked and many of them fled. This allowed the Muslims to overcome them and obtain victory. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 292-293.

Generally speaking, 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 soldier that possesses no weapons to defend himself would be defeated; an ignorant Muslim will have no weapon to defend himself 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.

Free of Greed

A Muslim army from Iraq was commanded to support a Muslim army from Syria during the conquest of Armenia. But before the Iraqi army arrived the Syrian army had already conquered Armenia. The leader of the Syrian army wrote to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, to ask whether the Iraqi soldiers should be allocated a share of the war booty. He commanded that they should, as their intention was to aid them during this conquest. The Syrian soldiers were told about this and they replied that they would hear and obey the Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 308.

Abdur Rahman Ibn Rabeeah, may Allah be pleased with him, was appointed the governor of Al Baab. The king of Al Baab was under the control of the Muslim governor and so when the king of China sent him some gifts, including a priceless ruby, he presented it to the governor, Abdur Rahman, may Allah be pleased with him. He in turn returned it to the king of Al Baab, as the gift was intended for him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 311-312.

The Muslims were interested in serving the cause of Allah, the Exalted, not gaining wealth.

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...”

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, Uthman Ibn Affan, 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.

Uthman, 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.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, continued to remove the need for the poor and disabled to pay the tax (Jizya), 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.

Compiling the Quran

After the Battle of Yamaamah, which led to many Muslim casualties, many of which 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 Hafsa Bint Umar, may Allah be pleased with her. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 7191.

Up to the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, it was permissible for Muslims to recite the Holy Quran according to the different dialects it was revealed in. According to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2419, it was revealed in seven different dialects. This allowed for flexibility in its recitation. But during the conquest of

Armenia and Azerbaijan, Hudhayfah Ibn Yaman, may Allah be pleased with him, noticed the differences in the recitation of the Holy Quran by the soldiers who came from Syria and Iraq. He was afraid that these differences may cause disunity, especially amongst the ignorant Muslims, as they may object to the modes of recitation they were not familiar with. So he came to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and requested him to gather the Muslim nation on one mode of recitation. He agreed to this after consulting the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and none of them disagreed with his decision. He sent for the physical copy of the Holy Quran which was with the mother of the believers, Hafsa Bint Umar, may Allah be pleased with her; made copies of this version; and dispatched them all over the Islamic empire and commanded them to follow its mode of recitation, which was the mode of recitation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his tribe, the Quraysh. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 4987.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, took great steps to ensure the Holy Quran reached the following generations. Therefore, Muslims must honor their efforts by sincerely obeying and following the Holy Quran at all times.

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.

In addition, the actions of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates the importance of unity in Islam.

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 themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

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 themselves 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.

Being Trustworthy

Whenever Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, departed from Medina he always appointed someone trustworthy in charge to manage its affairs until he returned. He would often appoint Zaid Ibn Thabit, may Allah be pleased with him, in charge.

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.

Monitoring Others

Uthman Ibn Affan, 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.

Uthman, 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.

Uthman, may Allah pleased with him, had many inspectors whose duty was to oversee the governors and interact with the locals to ensure the governors were fulfilling their duties. They, in turn, had many aids to ensure their duty was fulfilled to the highest of standards.

He would regularly send for random citizens from different areas to question them about their governor and the affairs of the people.

He would request regular reports from his governors on the affairs of the people. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 365-367.

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.

Leading Correctly

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once wrote a public letter to the different regions and advised them the following things. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 368.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned that he regularly checked up on his governors and held meetings with them every Pilgrimage season. He also urged the public 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 themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also mentioned that every complaint about him or one of his employees which was brought to him would be looked into by him. He assured the people that neither him nor his family had any rights that come before the rights of the people.

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 themselves harm.

One should be just in respect to people by treating them how they wish to be treated by others. They should never compromise on the teachings of Islam by committing injustice to people in order to obtain worldly things. 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also urged every person who had a complaint to come to him to settle the score or to let them forgive, for Allah, the Exalted, rewards that greatly.

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.”

Fulfilling Duties Sincerely

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, refrained from appointing his relatives as governors during his Caliphate, as he disliked showing outward signs of favoritism. But Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, did appoint some relatives who were already appointed before his Caliphate, such as Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan and Amr Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with them. But he only appointed those worthy of it, just like his predecessors done. Both methods are acceptable as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed relatives and non-relatives to leadership roles. All that matters is that every appointment is justified and one remains sincere to Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of all the rightly-guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with 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 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 themselves and others. A Muslim should always give priority to those actions which are for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. One should love others and dislike their sins for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of their own desires. When they help others or refuse to take part in sins it should be for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts this mentality has perfected their faith. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Seditions & Turmoil

Fear for the Nation

One of the main things which led to the seditions which began towards the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was the people's desire for worldly things. Prior to this, the general masses, like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were fully focused on practically preparing for the hereafter so they ignored worldly luxuries. But when the worldly blessings began to open up to them, through conquests and trading, then their focus fell on enjoying the material world and they therefore turned away from preparing for the hereafter. Only the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and some of their sincere Followers, may Allah have mercy on them, remained firm on preparing for the hereafter. Concentrating on the hereafter forces one to constantly think and prepare for their accountability on the Day of Judgement which leads one to adopting good characteristics, which in turn leads to unity. But when one focuses on enjoying the material world, they forget their accountability. Then they are encouraged to obtain and enjoy worldly luxuries without restriction. This causes one to adopt bad characteristics, such as greed and envy, and this in turn leads to disunity amongst Muslims.

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.

Warning Against Seditions

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, began to observe an increase in public sins and bad conduct he gave the following sermon, which has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 454-455.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned that he was hearing news about the increased wrongdoing which was occurring in society. He was not going to be the first one to open the door of sedition or initiate it. He was reining himself in and restraining himself. And whoever followed him, he would lead him on the correct path and whoever did not follow him, then they should remember that every soul will be brought forward on the Day of Judgement for accountability. He concluded, that whoever sought the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, should be pleased but whoever sought worldly gain would be a loser.

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.

A Beautiful Sermon – 4

Uthman Ibn Affan, 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, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 455-456.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, advised the people that Allah, the Exalted, had granted worldly blessings so that they seek reward in the hereafter through them. He did not grant them so that people become content with them.

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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that the world will fade away, whereas the hereafter will last forever, so they should not be tempted or distracted by temporary worldly blessings from preparing for the eternal hereafter.

One must adopt the correct perception and understanding in respect to this material world and the hereafter in order to avoid this distraction.

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...”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also advised the people that the world will fade away, whereas the hereafter will last forever, so they should not be tempted or distracted by temporary worldly blessings from preparing for the eternal hereafter. He then warned the people to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to adhere to the main body of the Muslims and not to divide into groups and factions. He then recited chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 103-104:

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allāh upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allāh make clear to you His verses that you may be guided. And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.”

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 themselves which is a characteristic of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515, as they desire to outdo their fellow Muslims in worldly things. Persisting on this competition will cause a Muslim to love, hate, give and withhold all for the sake of the material world instead of for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is an aspect of perfecting one's faith according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681. This competition is the difference between the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and many of the Muslims today.

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.

Ignorance

Another major cause of the seditions which occurred at the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was ignorance. The newly-converted Muslims, who were not Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, nor did they learn directly from them, would learn a few verses or Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without understanding their meanings correctly and would then deem themselves fit enough to judge truth from falsehood. This caused them to differ from the scholars and even led them to fighting against other Muslims without justification. In addition, as the spread of Islam was swift it was very difficult for the Islamic government to keep up with this movement in respect to educating the new Muslims and as a result wide-spread ignorance increased.

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 themselves 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.

Weakness of Faith

Another major cause of the seditions which occurred at the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was weakness of faith. Many of the newly-converted Muslims in the time of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, only accepted Islam as it was the fashionable thing to do. They did not accept it based on evidence and understanding. Rather, they accepted it on blind imitation of others. Many of these people apostatized during the Caliphate of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him. Many of those who repented and those who accepted Islam after the apostate wars failed to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to obtain certainty of faith. Instead, they fulfilled the outward elements of Islam and treated them as a few practices which needed to be fulfilled but took no steps to learn how to live as a pious Muslim in their day-to-day activities. Because of this they failed to exchange their negative characteristics with the good qualities taught in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, all of which prevent the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the harming of people. As their faith was weak, they failed to remember their accountability in the hereafter and as a result they were easily swayed by the enemies of Islam to get involved in seditions.

A great obstacle to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. It is a blameworthy characteristic which gives rise to other negative characteristics, such as failing to act on one's knowledge, fearing others, placing the obedience of people above the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, having hope in forgiveness without striving for it and other undesired characteristics. The greatest affliction of weakness of faith is that it allows one to commit sins, such as neglecting the obligatory duties. The root cause of weakness of faith is ignorance of Islam.

One should strive to gain knowledge in order to strengthen their faith. With time they will eventually reach certainty of faith which is so strong that it safeguards a person through all tests and trials and ensures they fulfil their duties both religious and worldly. This knowledge is obtained when one studies the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Specifically, those teachings which discuss the promises of reward for those who are obedient and the punishment for those who are disobedient to Allah, the Exalted. This creates fear of punishment and hope of reward in a Muslim's heart which acts like a pull and push mechanism towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

One can strengthen their faith by reflecting on the creations within the Heavens and the Earth. When done correctly this clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. 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...”

For example, if a Muslim ponders over the night and day and how perfectly in sync they are and the other things linked to them they will truly believe that this is not a random thing meaning, there is a force which ensures everything runs like clockwork. This is the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, if one ponders over the perfect timing of the night and day they will realise it clearly indicates that there is only

one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. If there were more than one God each god would desire the night and day to occur according to their own desires. This would lead to utter chaos as one God might desire the Sun to rise whereas the other God might desire the night to continue. The perfect uninterrupted system found within the universe proves there is only one God namely, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined...”

Another thing which can strengthen one's faith is to persist in righteous deeds and abstain from all sins. As faith is belief supported by actions it weakens when sins are committed and strengthens when good deeds are performed. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5662, that a Muslim is not a believer when they drink alcohol.

Culture vs Religion

Another major cause of the seditions which occurred at the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was a lack of differentiation between culture and religion. Due to widespread ignorance which was caused by a lack of desire to seek and act on Islamic knowledge and the sheer number of new Muslims which had limited access to Islamic knowledge, these new Muslims fused their cultural and religious beliefs. This caused them to compromise on the essence of Islamic teachings, which in turn led to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the oppression of people.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-Muslims. The more Muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many Muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern Muslim wedding to observe how many non-Muslim cultural practices have been adopted by Muslims. What makes this worse is that many Muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Because of this non-Muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of Muslims and their habit of adopting non-Muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant Muslims have resurrected them by

adopting the cultural practices of non-Muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices Muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Blind Imitation

Another major cause of the seditions which occurred at the end of the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was blind imitation. As time passed on, the number of newly-converted Muslims and the number of second-generation Muslims were increasing exponentially. Many of them did not dedicate themselves to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge and instead blindly imitated those who came before them. Those who imitated the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were protected from misguidance but many of them began to blindly imitate their ignorant elders who possessed weak faith. As a result, ignorance and misguidance increased within the society. When these things increase then the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the harming of people increases.

Blind imitation must be avoided, as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not blindly imitate the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Rather, they learned and acted on Islamic knowledge thereby gaining understanding and insight. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, “This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me...””

A Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4049, indicates the importance of not blindly imitating others in accepting Islam, such as

one's family, without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one surpasses blind imitation and obeys Allah, the Exalted, while truly recognising his Lordship and their own servanthood. This is in fact the purpose of mankind. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

How can one truly worship someone they do not even recognize? Blind imitation is acceptable for children but adults must follow in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by truly understanding the purpose of their creation through knowledge. Ignorance is the very reason why the Muslims who fulfil their obligatory duties still feel disconnected from Allah, the Exalted. This recognition aids a Muslim to behave as a true servant of Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day not just during the five daily obligatory prayers. Only through this will Muslims fulfil true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. And this is the weapon which overcomes all difficulties a Muslim faces during their life. If they do not possess this they will face difficulties without gaining reward. In fact, it will only lead to more difficulties in both worlds. Performing the obligatory duties through blind imitation may fulfil the obligation but it will not safely guide one through every difficulty in order to reach the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. In fact, in most cases blind imitation will lead to one eventually abandoning their obligatory duties. This Muslim will only fulfil their duties in times of difficulty and turn away from them in times of ease or vice versa.

Never Fooled Twice

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.

But during his Caliphate, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, felt enough time had passed (over a decade) where the former apostates remained firm on Islam. So as a result he waived the restrictions placed on them by Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and he even appointed some of them as leaders. Even though his decision was logical and was seen as a step towards reconciling with the former apostates, in some cases it backfired as some of them became involved in the seditions which led to the martyrdom of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 463-464.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6133, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer does not get stung from the same hole twice.

This means that a believer does not get fooled by something or someone twice. This includes committing sins. A true believer is not immune to committing sins. But when they happen to commit them they do not repeat their mistake and instead learn and change for the better by sincerely repenting to Allah, the Exalted.

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.

This Hadith applies to every aspect of one's life as a true believer is the one who constantly learns from their experiences and knowledge in order to change for the better so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Insight

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, once wrote to his commanders with the following words, which has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 468-469.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned them that selfishness was becoming widespread.

The root of selfishness is 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.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned them that selfishness was becoming widespread and the cause of that was the love of the material world and whims and desires.

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.”

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, warned them that selfishness was becoming widespread and the cause of that was the love of the material world and whims and desires.

This attitude can encourage one to misuse Islamic knowledge in order to fulfill their worldly desires.

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

Even though, the foundation of all good in both worldly and religious matters is knowledge Muslims must understand that knowledge will only

benefit them when they firstly correct their intention. Meaning, they strive to obtain and act on knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. All other reasons will only lead to a loss of reward and even punishment if a Muslim fails to sincerely repent.

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

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

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

Forbearance

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was extremely forbearing and this was exploited by some who desired to cause trouble for him and the Muslims. On one occasion, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, refuted the criticisms of the troublemakers with clear evidence in front of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and other Muslims. When the Muslims insisted on punishing these critics, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, let them go unharmed and commented that he would pardon and would try to explain the truth to people and only punish them if Islamic law demands it. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 469-470.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, gave the same orders to his governors and so they did not punish those who sowed discord amongst the Muslims. The severest punishment a group of these enemies received was to be exiled from one city to Syria. But even when they were sent to Syria, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, the governor of Syria, treated them kindly and tried his best to explain the true teachings of Islam to them so that they would desist from their evil plan. Even though they rejected his advice and even physically attacked him, he still did not punish them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 496-501.

These same people were then sent to Homs in Syria, which was under the governorship of Abdur Rahman Bin Khalid Bin Waleed, may Allah have mercy on him. He, on the other hand, treated these troublemakers with more harshness and would regularly criticize them. He forced them to accompany him everywhere, thereby making their lives difficult. As a result they pretended to repent from their evil ways. The governor sent one of these troublemakers, Ashtar Al Nakhai, to Medina where he apologized to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and falsely promised him to stop their evil activities. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, forgave them and granted them the freedom to live where ever they wished. They remained quiet for a while and then re-engaged in sowing discord within society. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 504-505.

Even though they did not deserve it, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, overlooked and showed great leniency towards them. 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.”

Spreading Gossip

The enemies of Islam understood a valuable lesson from their efforts against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the earlier Caliphs namely, the Muslims who were steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, could not be defeated externally meaning, by fighting. They understood that the only way to defeat the Muslims was from within. Many of these enemies, such as Abdullah Ibn Saba, outwardly accepted Islam in order to infiltrate the ranks of the Muslims and sow discord amongst them. Their tactics worked to such an extent that even the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were their governors were being criticized by the public. When news reached Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, he sent his employees to investigate his governors but they found nothing negative against them. The accusations against them and him were nothing but lies.

These lies were more effective towards the end of the Caliphate of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. As the number of expeditions decreased, many of these soldiers were no longer preoccupied with fighting and as a result they would spend most of their time discussing the affairs of the Caliphate, as if they were in charge of it. As many of these Muslims were ignorant, weak of faith and drowned in tribalism and greed, manipulating them to revolt against the Caliphate was not so difficult.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 471-472.

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

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

“Woe to every scorner and mocker.”

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

It is a duty on a Muslim not to pay any attention to a tale bearer as they are wicked people who should not be trusted or believed. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6:

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

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

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

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

“...And do not spy...”

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

Muslims should avoid tale bearing and the company of tale bearers as they can never be worthy of trust or companionship until they sincerely repent.

Misusing Knowledge

The enemies of Islam, such as Abdullah Ibn Saba, infiltrated the ranks of Muslims in order to sow discord. One of the ways he achieved this was to misinterpret verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As the majority of the people they attempted to negatively influence were ignorant and weak of faith, they fell for his plan and joined his mission. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 484-485.

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

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

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

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

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

Corruption

As time passed, the more influential these internal enemies of Islam became. Their influence reached major places, such as Kufa, Basra and Egypt. They even forged letters claiming they were from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Letters which criticized the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. In order to create divisions within society, they even began to claim that Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was the rightful heir to the Caliphate after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his right was therefore usurped, even though Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, never claimed such an absurd thing and in fact always defended and obeyed the first three rightly-guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 485-490.

A sign of hypocrisy is that a person spreads corruption in society. This negative characteristic affects all social levels beginning from a family unit and ending at the international level. This type of person dislikes seeing people uniting on good as this may cause the worldly status of others to increase beyond their own. This drives them to backbiting and slander in order to cause people to turn against each other. Their evil attitude destroys their own ties of kinship and when they observe other families who are happy it drives them to destroy their happiness also. They are fault finders who dedicate their time unveiling the mistakes of others in order to drag their social status down. They are the first people to begin gossiping about others and act deaf whenever good things are spoken about. Peace and quiet disturbs them so they seek to create problems in order to entertain themselves. They fail to remember the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn

Majah, number 2546. It advises that whoever covers the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will cover their faults. But whoever seeks out and unveils the faults of others Allah, the Exalted, will expose their faults to the people. So in realty, this type of person is only unveiling their own faults to society even though they believe they are exposing the faults of others.

Tolerance

During the Caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, some people in the city of Kufa, in Iraq, began to stir up trouble. They would persistently cause problems for their governors and repeatedly complained to Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, about them and insisted that they should be replaced. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, once wrote to them saying that he would be tolerant and patient with them. That he would fulfill all their requests as long as it did not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. And that he would excuse them from anything they disliked, as long as that did not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. He concluded that after treating them in this manner they had no excuse to misbehave. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 359-360.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all Muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the Muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to

obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [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.

Commanding Evil and Forbidding Good

While the governor of Kufa, Sa'eed Ibn Al Aas, may Allah have mercy on him, was in Medina, one of the leaders of the troublemakers in Kufa, Ashtar Al Nakhai, spread further lies about both the governor and the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, thereby enraging the troublemakers further. He urged them to camp outside Kufa and prevent the governor from entering the city when he returned. Nearly one thousand troublemakers joined him. When Sa'eed, may Allah have mercy on him, reached Kufa he remained patient with them and their demands for him to return to Medina and command the Caliph to appoint Abu Musa Al Ashari, may Allah be pleased with him, as their governor. Sa'eed, may Allah have mercy on him, complied with their demands as he did not desire for the situation to get worse. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, also gave into their demands as he chose the path of patience. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 508-510.

A part of hypocrisy is that a person not only commits evil deeds themselves and abstains from righteous deeds but they encourage others to do the same. They want others to be in the same boat as them so that they find some comfort in their evil character. They not only drown themselves but take others down with them. Muslims must know that a person will be held accountable for every other person who commits a sin because of their invitation. This person will be treated as if they committed the sin even though they only invited others towards it. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 203. This is why some have said that blessed is the person whose evil dies with them because their sins will

increase if others act on their evil advice even though they are no longer alive.

Facing Turmoil

As the seditions began to increase in the different regions within the Islamic empire, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with them, summoned some of his governors and held a meeting with them. They each advised how he should deal with the troublemakers. One of them suggested that he was showing too much gentleness with them, whereas his predecessor, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would not have shown that gentleness with them. After hearing their advice, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that the door of sedition had opened and nothing would prevent it from affecting the nation, as this was something foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, insisted that he would not be the first to ignite the sedition by attacking and harming the troublemakers first. Instead, he would deal with them with gentleness and forgiveness, unless the sacred limits of Allah, the Exalted, were violated, in which case he would punish them according to the law. He commanded the governors to behave in the same manner. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 518-519.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, even sent two spies to infiltrate the ranks of the rebels, which they did successfully. The rebels informed them of their evil plan. They desired to first confront Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and falsely accuse him and his governors of wrongdoing. Then they would return to their cities and tell the people that the Caliph admitted the accusations were true but refused to step down as Caliph or sincerely repent from his behaviour. Then they would pretend to leave for the Holy Pilgrimage and instead enter Medina to besiege the Caliph. They would force him to either step down as Caliph or kill him if he refused. When Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him,

was informed of their plan he gathered the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and informed them. They urged him to arrest and execute them for their clear act of treason. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, refused and instead chose to deal with them gently and declared that he would only punish them if they publicly committed a crime that was legally punishable under Islamic law. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 521-522.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, did give the troublemakers an inch and they took from him a mile. A tactic Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, did not adopt. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, chose to adopt the particular tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of gentleness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not harm the hypocrites during his life, even though they committed many acts of treason against him. He did not desire to be remembered as someone who killed his own people. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 215.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, did not desire to be the one who ignited the flame of sedition within the nation. He knew if he attacked the rebels first, they would have used this as an excuse to spread further chaos and gather further support, which would have only caused more harm to the stability of the Islamic nation. His aim was to protect the general public and make things easy for them, even if he had to give up his own rights and his life in the process.

Generally speaking, one must adopt this attitude of making things easy for others.

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.

The Steadfast Caliph

Before the governor of Syria, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him, departed Medina after his meeting with the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, he urged him to accept one of two options. The first was that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, should move to Syria with him and that would ensure his protection as Syria was free of sedition and troublemakers. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that he would never depart from the city of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if it led to his death. The second option was that Mu'awiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, would send an army to Medina to constantly guard him and the city. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, refused this as he did not want the city to feel restricted for the people and reduce the provision which they enjoyed, as it would then need to be distributed to the new army also. Mu'awiyah warned Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, that this sedition might lead to his assassination or an invasion of Medina, but Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, replied that Allah, the Exalted, was sufficient for him and He is the best disposer of affairs. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 520-521.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, chose the path of patience and remaining firm, as he was not in the wrong. If the rebels harmed him while he was steadfast on the truth, then the future generations who used their common sense would clearly differentiate between who was on the truth and who was on falsehood. Whereas, if he fled Medina or harmed the rebels first then this would have thrown doubt on whether he was on the right path or not. In addition, he wanted to fulfill his promise of remaining patient, which he made with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when he told him that this sedition

would occur. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 529 and in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3711.

A Fair Hearing

In order to avoid further trouble and to prove his innocence, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, summoned the troublemakers to Medina and publicly responded to each of their complaints in front of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the other Muslims in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Their discussion, which is quoted below, has been recorded in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 523-527.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "They (the troublemakers) say that I offer the prayer in full when I travel and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, did not do that before me. But I offered the prayer in full when I traveled from Medina to Mecca as Mecca is a town in which I have a family, so I am staying with my family and I am not a traveler, is that not so?" and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, "They (the troublemakers) said that I have allocated grazing land to myself (from the conquered lands) and caused hardship for the Muslims and set aside a vast area of land for my camels. Before my time, grazing land was allocated for the camels that were given in obligatory charity and used in the path of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, all allocated land for grazing. I had to add to that land because the number of camels given in obligatory charity and used in the path of Allah, the

Exalted, increased. Furthermore, I did not prevent the poor from grazing their animals on that land. I never allocated it for my own livestock. When I was appointed Caliph, I was one of the richest of the Muslims in camels and sheep, but I have spent it all and I have no livestock at all now except two camels which I keep for the Holy Pilgrimage. Is that not so?" and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, "They (the troublemakers) say that I kept only one copy of the Holy Quran and burned all the rest (which contained the different modes of recitation) and I united the people in reading one (mode of recitation of the) Holy Quran. But the Holy Quran is the word of Allah, the Exalted, which came from Allah, the Exalted, and it is all one, and all I did was to unite the Muslims behind the Holy Quran and forbid them to differ concerning it. By doing that I followed in the footsteps of Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, who compiled the Holy Quran (in book form). Is that not so?" and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, "They (the troublemakers) say that I allowed Hakam Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, to return to Medina when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, banished him to Taif. Hakam Ibn Al Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, is from Mecca, not from Medina, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, exiled him from Mecca (not Medina) and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, allowed him to return to Mecca after he was pleased with him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent him to Taif and let him come back to Mecca. Is that not so?" and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, “They (the troublemakers) say that I employed young people and appointed youngsters as governors. But I have never appointed anyone but a man who was just and kind and of good character. These are the people over whom they were appointed – go and ask them about them. Those who came before me appointed some who were even younger than my governors. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed Usamah Ibn Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, when he was younger than those whom I appointed and they (the people) spoke more harshly to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, (about appointed Usamah, may Allah be pleased with him) than they spoke to me. Is that not so?” and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, “They (the troublemakers) say that I gave to Abdullah Ibn Sa’d Ibn Abi’l Sarh, may Allah be pleased with him, what Allah, the Exalted, granted of war booty. But I only gave him one-fifth of the spoils – which was one hundred thousand – when he conquered North Africa, as a reward for his efforts. I said to him: “If Allah, the Exalted, enables you to conquer North Africa, you will have one-fifth of the spoils as a reward.” Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, did that before me yet despite that some of the soldiers objected to my gift to him. Then I took the one-fifth of the spoils from Ibn Sa’d, may Allah be pleased with him, and gave it to the soldiers and Ibn Sa’d, may Allah be pleased with him, did not take anything. Is that not so?” and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, agreed with him.

He then said, “They (the troublemakers) say that I love my family and am generous to them. As for my love for my family, that did not make me biased towards them or make me support them in cases of injustice or mistreatment of others. Rather, they have duties like everyone else and I

take their dues from them. As for giving to them, I gave to them from my own wealth, not from the wealth of the Muslims, because I do not regard the wealth of the Muslims as lawful for me and no one has the right to do that. I used to give generously from my own wealth during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them. At that time I was very careful in spending. But now I am the oldest of my family and am approaching the end of my life and therefore have given my wealth to my family and relatives. Let the evildoers say what they say. By Allah, the Exalted, I did not take any wealth or surplus from any Muslim city. I let those cities keep their wealth and I did not bring anything to Medina except the one-fifth of the spoils of war. The Muslims took care of dividing the other four-fifths and gave it to those who were entitled to it. I did not take even a penny or anything else from that booty. I only eat from my own wealth and I only give to my family from my own wealth.”

He then said, “They (the troublemakers) say that I gave the conquered lands to certain men, while the Companions from Mecca and Medina, may Allah be pleased with them, and the other soldiers took part in conquering these lands. Whereas, I divided these lands among the conquerors, some of them settled there, and some came back to their families in Medina or elsewhere but that land remained in their possession and some sold the land and kept its price with them.”

The troublemakers did not care about his clear explanations as they were not seeking the truth, only turmoil. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, did not punish them, even though many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, urged him to. He instead allowed them to leave Medina in peace.

Good Advisors

During this difficult time, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, did not make decisions by himself. Rather, he always consulted the senior Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, before making any important decision, hoping this would reduce the seditions and increase peace and unity within the Islamic empire. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Page 529.

Generally speaking, 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...”

The Siege & Martyrdom of the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan (RA)

Evil Plots

The troublemakers put their final evil plan into motion. They pretended to unite in order to perform the Holy Pilgrimage and therefore departed their cities with the pilgrims but instead headed to Medina to besiege the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. This was the best time as many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and sincere Muslims living in Medina, also departed for the Holy Pilgrimage and therefore the city was more vulnerable. Each rebel group from each city was going to declare that they wanted a particular Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, to be the Caliph instead of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. By selecting different people the rebels desired to create further chaos and disunity.

When each group arrived they confronted Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and debated with him over some fabricated complaints. He and some other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, discussed each one with them until a deal was made between them, such as appointing different people as their governors. A deal which did not contradict the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. As a result the groups departed Medina pleased with what they achieved. But the leaders of the troublemakers did not achieve their goal of removing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, or killing him, so they were forced to formulate a new plan.

They decided to forge a letter that was supposedly sent by the Caliph ordering his governor in Egypt to arrest and execute the Egyptian delegation which visited Medina. When the Egyptians found this letter they headed back to Medina to confront the Caliph, who denied knowing about it. Strangely enough, the rebel group from Iraq somehow was informed about what occurred with the Egyptian delegation, even though they were travelling home in opposite directions from Medina. They also returned to Medina at the same time the Egyptians did. This clearly indicates that the troublemakers from Iraq already knew about the forged letter beforehand, otherwise they would not have returned to Medina at the same time the Egyptians did. In fact, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, figured this out and accused them of this. Their fabricating a letter was no shock as they fabricated many letters which were supposedly sent by Companions, such as Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and the mother of the believers, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with them, which urged the people to rebel against the Caliph. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 531-537.

Generally speaking, 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?...”

Helping Others in Good

When the rebels returned to Medina they besieged Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, to the point he was prevented from leaving his house and from obtaining basic provisions, such as food and water. As he could not leave his house, he could not lead the obligatory prayers in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of the leaders of the rebels led the prayers and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, refrained from leading the prayers themselves as this might have been seen as an act of support for the rebels. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was consulted about praying behind this rebel and he commanded that whenever the people were doing something good, a person should join them. But if the people were doing something bad, a person should refrain from joining them. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 538-539.

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

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

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

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

He instead obeyed the command in the verse mentioned earlier and supported what was right. This is confirmed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. The honour and respect of Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, within society only increased by this action. This is obvious to those who are aware of Islamic history.

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

Obedience to the Prophet (PBUH)

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged by the rebels they told him to either resign as Caliph or they would kill him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, refused to resign as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly commanded him that if Allah, the Exalted, entrusted him with authority he should not give it up even when the hypocrites demand him to, until he met him (in the next world). This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 112.

Abdullah Ibn Umar urged Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, not to resign, as this would set a tradition for the future that when the people dislike their Caliph they would simply force him to resign or kill him. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 539-540.

If Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, resigned it would have made the authority a play-toy in the hands of the thugs that control the people. This would allow the criminals within society to run the society as they would appoint and dismiss those in charge whenever they pleased. This would lead to utter chaos in society. If he crushed the rebels, which he had the power to do, then that would have given them more of an excuse to rebel against the authority. And he did not desire to be the leader who shed the blood of Muslims. By remaining patient, he made it clear to all that he was in the right and the rebels were in the wrong.

When they threatened to kill him, he commented that they had no basis for killing him as he never committed any of the sins, nor was he accused of any of the sins, which are punished by execution, which are: apostatizing, committing adultery or in the case of legal retribution where a killer is executed for killing someone unlawfully. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4024.

One of the major things to note is that his life was in danger yet he remained sincerely obedient to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

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.

Using Knowledge

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged by the rebels, he attempted to calmly explain their error to them. He requested for one of their representatives to come to him and they send Sasaah Ibn Sawhaan. He purposely misquoted the Holy Quran in order to justify fighting against him but Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, explained to the rebels its true interpretation and how the Holy Quran supports him against them and not the other way round. Sasaah purposely misinterpreted chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 39. Then Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, recited the same verse and the ones after it proving that he was in the right, as Allah, the Exalted, granted him authority and he fulfilled the characteristics mentioned within the verses to perfection. Something the rebels fully knew but did not care about as their issue had nothing to do with establishing the truth. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verses 39-41:

“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allāh is competent to give them victory. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right - only because they say, "Our Lord is Allāh." And were it not that Allāh checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allāh is much mentioned [i.e., praised]. And Allāh will surely support those who support Him [i.e., His cause]. Indeed, Allāh is Powerful and Exalted in Might. [And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakāh and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allāh belongs the outcome of [all] matters.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 543-544.

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

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

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

Muslims should therefore correct their intention in all matters as they will be judged on this. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari,

number 1. And they should remember that one of the first people to enter Hell will be a scholar who only obtained knowledge in order to show off to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4923.

To conclude, only obtaining and acting on useful knowledge with the correct intention is true beneficial knowledge.

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

Pinnacle of Sincerity

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged by the rebels he attempted to calm them down and avert the danger which was looming over the nation. He warned them that if they killed him then the nation would become divided. He reminded them of his virtues thereby proving his deep sincerity. These included the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, testifying that he was a martyr; the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, using his own hand to represent the hand of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, during his pledge of allegiance at Hudaibiya; his expansion of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when the latter called for it; him equipping the army of the Battle of Tabuk; and him purchasing the well of Roomah and donating it to the people of Medina.

He also defended himself when he was publicly criticized in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by one of the rebel leaders. He commented that he was the fourth person to enter Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave him his daughter in marriage and when she died, he gave him his other daughter in marriage. He never committed adultery or stole before he accepted Islam or after. He never told lies after he accepted Islam. He compiled (memorized) the Holy Quran during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And since he became Muslim, he freed a slave every Friday or two slaves on a Friday if he could not free one the week before.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 544-547 and in a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmed, Number 420.

All these acts and many more, indicate the deep level of sincerity Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, possessed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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:

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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 Ale Imran, verse 31:

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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 themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing

the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

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

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

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

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

Adopting Patience

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged he was offered support by many of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who urged him to fight back and quash the rebels. The determination of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, only increased when Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, mentioned that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned them that after he passed away turmoil would afflict them. When they questioned him about gaining safety he commented that they should find safety with the trustworthy one and his group and then the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, pointed to Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. But Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, urged those who obeyed him to remain patient and not engage in fighting and spill the blood of the rebels or have their blood spilled for his sake. At one point there was over 700 sincere Muslims with Uthman, including the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, all prepared to fight and defend him but he forbade them to.

Al Mugheerah Ibn Shuhbah advised Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them, to either fight and defend himself as he was in the right or flee to Mecca where he believed the rebels would not attack him there or to flee to Syria where the governor would protect him meaning, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan, may Allah be pleased with him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, responded by saying that he was not going to be the first Muslim leader to shed the blood of Muslims. He feared that even if he fled to Mecca they would attack it. And he would never flee from the city of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Syria or any other place.

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 547-551.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, 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 than 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.

Reasons for Patience

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged by the rebels he adopted patience and refrained from fighting them. Some of the reasons for this attitude include: the promise he made to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that he would bear this event with patience. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3711.

He did not desire to be the leader who shed the blood of the Muslims.

He was sincerely obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who told him that if Allah, the Exalted, placed him in authority and the hypocrites wanted him to take off this garment of authority, he should refuse. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 112.

He knew the rebels only desired to harm him so he did not want any of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, or sincere Muslims to be hurt or killed because of him.

He was aware that he would face a huge calamity and would be killed wrongfully while adhering patiently to the truth. Glad tidings given to him by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on

more than one occasion, such as the Hadiths found in Jami At Tirmidhi, numbers 3708 and 3704 and in Sahih Bukhari, number 7097.

He saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a dream the night before Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was martyred and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to break his fast with him the next day. This indicated that his martyrdom was close.

Refraining from fighting would give him a stronger position against the rebels on the Day of Judgement.

If Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, resigned it would have made the authority a play-toy in the hands of the thugs that control the people. This would allow the criminals within society to run the society as they would appoint and dismiss those in charge whenever they pleased. This would lead to utter chaos in society. If he crushed the rebels, which he had the power to do, then that would have given them more of an excuse to rebel against the authority.

By remaining patient he made it clear to all that he was in the right and the rebels were in the wrong. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 551-553.

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. But a higher and more rewarding level than patience is contentment. This is when a Muslim deeply believes that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants and they therefore prefer His choice over their own. 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."

A patient Muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register¹ before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a Muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a Muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient Muslim truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a Muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This Muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

It is important to know that Allah, the Exalted, tests those He loves. If they show patience they will be rewarded but if they are angered it only proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2396.

A Muslim should be patient or content with the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and hardship. This will reduce one's distress and provide them with much blessings in both worlds. Whereas, impatience will only destroy the reward they could have received. Either way a Muslim will go through the situation decreed by Allah, the Exalted, but it is their choice whether they desire reward or not.

A Muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy 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."

A Muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. 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 Muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a Muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent Muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a Muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content Muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a Muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and

difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a Muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

"...and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.""

If a Muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a Muslim who is

constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

Advising Others Differently

The mothers of the believers and wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, may Allah be pleased with them, attempted to help Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. When he was besieged, the rebels prevented food and water reaching him and so some of the mothers of the believers, may Allah be pleased with them, personally escorted water and food to his home but their riding animals were prevented from coming close to his home. They were not attacked directly as this would have led to an all-out fight. Some of the mothers of the believers, such as Aisha, may Allah be pleased with them, first verbally advised the rebels to desist from their evil plan but when they failed to pay heed, she decided to guide them through her actions by persuading them to join her to perform the Holy Pilgrimage. But this plan was not affective enough, as the rebels were determined on their evil plan. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 554-557.

Even though commanding good and forbidding evil is an important duty on each Muslim yet they will encounter people who do not seem to listen nor act on the advice given to them. This is quite obvious especially in this day and age. In cases like this it is best not to give up but to consider changing one's technique. Advising others through words is one way of commanding good and forbidding evil but a better way is to advise others through one's actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest teacher as he advised others through his words and actions. This leading by example technique is important to adopt as it is more likely to affect others in a positive way. But those who still fail to accept this technique of commanding good and forbidding evil should be left alone. One should continue showing a practical example but perhaps take a step back from

verbally advising them as continuously advising others who do not pay attention can cause both parties to become irritated and angered. This contradicts the very attitude a Muslim should possess when they advise others towards good. It is a sad truth that one should not bother verbally imposing themselves on people who do not care what they have to say. But they should continue advising others through their actions. In this way one not only helps themselves by refining their own character but also fulfils their duty in commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 17:

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

No Compromising on Faith

As discussed earlier, the rebels forged a letter claiming it was from Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him. The letter stated that the governor of Egypt should detain and execute the Egyptian delegation which returned from Medina after debating with Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. Amongst the delegation was Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakkar, may Allah have mercy on him. He had been deceived into believing the letter was either sent by Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, or by one of his associates, such as Marwan Ibn Al Hakam, and Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, failed to investigate it and serve justice. It was highly unlikely one of his associates, such as Marwan, wrote this letter as it was clear this letter would only make things worse for Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as the general public, especially the rebels, would have a genuine reason to complain and rebel against him. It was highly unlikely that one of his associates was trying to betray Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, as they all cared for him, as he treated them with great love and respect. Therefore, the letter was obviously forged by the leaders of the rebels who had forged letters before.

Furthermore, both the mother of the believers, Aisha Bint Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with her, who was the sister of Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakkar, may Allah have mercy on him, and his mother, Asma Bint Umays, may Allah be pleased with her, understood that the rebels had deceived him into believing a lie. They tried hard to deter him from helping the rebels against Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, but their advice did not work. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, *The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan*, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 557-558.

Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakkar, may Allah have mercy on him, did help the rebels initially but in the last minute repented from his actions and withheld his hands from killing Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in Imam Suyuti's, Tarikh Al Khulafa, Page 174.

Both his mother and sister, did not look at their relationship with him and instead adhered to the truth, even if that meant they criticized their own relative.

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 themselves being invited to a pub or club after work.

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

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

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

Urging Unity

When Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was besieged he commanded Abdullah Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, to lead the Holy Pilgrimage, which he reluctantly accepted to do as he desired to stay with the Caliph and defend him. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, send a letter with him which was to be read to the public during the Pilgrimage season. The letter explained the situation in Medina, the criticism of the rebels and his reply to them and it urged the people to remain unified in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of what occurred. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 559-568.

Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, publicly urged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the sincere Muslims not to fight or confront the rebels and all of them reluctantly accepted his request and they only stationed a few young Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and Followers, may Allah have mercy on them, at the door of the Caliph's house. This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 570-571.

Even during such difficult times, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was concerned about the unity of the Muslims. Muslims must therefore strive to uphold this important Islamic principle.

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 themselves. An envious Muslim should therefore, strive to remove this feeling from their heart by showing good character and kindness towards the person they envy, such as praising their good qualities and supplicating for them until their envy becomes love for them.

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 themselves 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 Caliph's Sacrifice

When the Pilgrimage season ended many of the pilgrims began marching to Medina in order to protect the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and many soldiers were also dispatched by the governors of the different Islamic regions with the same purpose. The leaders of the rebels heard of this and realized they needed to act soon otherwise they would be overcome by opposition. On the day of his martyrdom, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was fasting and fell asleep. He saw the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Abu Bakkar and Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with them, in his dream. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told him to break his fast with them. After waking up, Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, commented that he was going to die that day. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, knew he was going to be a martyr and so he became further resolved in not allowing anyone to defend him, as it would only cause bloodshed and disunity without saving his life. He urged the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the sincere Muslims who had been stationed at his house not to fight when some violence broke out. After Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, convinced the sincere Muslims to leave eventually, a few rebels managed to enter the home of Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and attacked him while he was reciting the Holy Quran. His wife attempted to help him and she was also wounded in the encounter. She even shouted at them that they desired to kill a man who would stay up all night and recite the entire Holy Quran in a single cycle of prayer. But this did not deter the evil doers. They martyred the Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and his blood spilled on the following verse of the Holy Quran, chapter 2, verse 137:

“So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allāh will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”

After martyring Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, they ransacked his home and even the public treasury, though there was virtually nothing in it as Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, would swiftly spend it on the needy.

This event took place in the 35th year after the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, when Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was 82 years old.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were deeply grieved by his martyrdom and showed their frustration verbally, such as Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with him, who first recited the following verse and then supplicated to Allah, the Exalted, to seize the troublemakers. And his supplication was accepted and all of the leaders of the rebels were eventually killed. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-106:

“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.” Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become

worthless; and We will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight [i.e., importance]. That is their recompense - Hell - for what they denied and [because] they took My signs and My messengers in ridicule.”

This has been discussed in Imam Muhammad As Sallaabee's, The Biography of Uthman Ibn Affan, Dhun-Noorayn, Pages 571-580.

Electing Ali Ibn Abu Talib (RA) as Caliph

Further Turmoil

The martyrdom of Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, caused a great deal of further seditions and turmoil. Because of this event the Muslim nation became divided and has remained so until today. Hatred was created against one another and many calamities followed. The evil doers prevailed and the righteous were subdued. The evil doers became more active and caused further problems and the righteous were unable to spread the good to overcome it. The people swore allegiance to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who reluctantly accepted, and he was the most entitled to becoming the next Caliph at that point and was the best of those who remained, but people were divided as the fire of seditions had been lit. Unity broke down and there was no discipline left and the new Caliph and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were not able to achieve all they wanted of spreading goodness and justice.

The two spiritual diseases that manifested in the rebels began to spread to the rest of the nation: the trial of doubts and the trial of desires. The trial of doubts is caused by ignorance of Islamic teachings that leads to weakness of faith. When one possesses weakness of faith then deviating from the truth becomes easy. They are easily misled into believing incorrect interpretations of the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon. This can even lead one to harm innocent people in the name of Islam. In addition, this encourages one to adopt wishful thinking instead of hope in Allah, the

Exalted. Wishful thinking consists of intentionally persisting in disobeying Allah, the Exalted, yet believing He will forgive.

The trial of desires involves preferring the material world over preparing for the hereafter. Their desires urge them to gain, enjoy and hoard worldly blessings and ignore the hereafter. If the desires are strong enough, they can urge one to the unlawful and even harming others for the sake of worldly things such as wealth and authority. Desires encourages one to cherry pick the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, thereby one obeys and ignores according to their whims and fancies. This person even misinterprets divine teachings in order to justify fulfilling their desires. Ignoring the hereafter prevents one from remembering their accountability and when this occurs then any action becomes possible.

The cure for both trials of doubts and desires is sincerely learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one obtains certainty of faith. This acts as a shield against the consequences of doubts and desires.

Even though the turmoil within the Islamic nation spread rapidly, none the less, it did not prevent the Caliph, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. But those who remained firm on misguidance and causing corruption did not escape the consequences of their treachery in this world and they will certainly be paid in full in the hereafter and so will those who follow in their footsteps. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verse 227:

“...And those who have wronged are going to know to what [kind of] return they will be returned.”

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.

A Truthful Eulogy

Uthman Ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, was humble before his Lord, the chaste and truly devoted to his Lord, the possessor of two lights, the most revering of Allah, the Exalted, who prayed towards the two prayer directions (Qibla), the Sacred House in Mecca and the Furthest Mosque in Jerusalem. He enjoyed the privilege and blessings of migrating twice. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, prayed and invoked the divine favors between the two pinnacles of the night. He rose regularly at night to offer long voluntary prayers and to prostrate himself before his Lord. He prayed for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to embrace him in this life and in the hereafter, and he feared His displeasure and punishment. He was generous and most shy and he was vigilant, reverent and fearful of His Lord. His fortune during the day consisted of goodness of character, fasting and prayers and during the night, his fortune was made of voluntary prayers, reciting the Holy Quran, contemplation and prayers. Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, was amongst those whom Allah, the Exalted, described in chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 93:

“...they fear Allāh and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allāh and believe, and then fear Allāh and do good; and Allāh loves the doers of good.”

Conclusion

It is clear when studying the blessed life of Uthman Ibn Affan, 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 Uthman, 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.

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 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.

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.

Finally, it is a duty on all Muslims to avoid following in the footsteps of the rebels by succumbing to the trials of doubts and desires. This is only achieved when one sincerely learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby obtaining certainty of faith. This will ensure they remain firm on the right path, the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. It is hoped that the one who sincerely walks their path will end up with them in the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 69:

“And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.”

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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