

Good Character Advice for Women

PodWoman



Achieve Noble Character

Good Character Advice for Women

ShaykhPod Books

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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 Advice on Good Character for Women.

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 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.

Good Character Advice for Women

Be Independent

In the modern world, the majority of unmarried Muslim women are independent. Many are studying at educational institutes, have part time or full time jobs and have control over their lives and their responsibilities, such as paying their own bills. They travel to different places, such as work and school, by themselves without being dependent on others. But it is strange how many women after getting married seem to lose this independence. Many begin to heavily depend on their husbands to join them in everything they do, such as shopping or other activities, which they often do happily by themselves when unmarried. Even though, a married couple should spend quality time together as this is a part of having a successful marriage yet there is a difference between this and completely becoming dependent on one's husband to the point they no longer can do the simple things they would do by themselves when unmarried. This type of excessive dependency and neediness is not healthy and women should not become like this. Being needy leads to excessive demands, from one's husband, which in turn leads to many arguments and even divorce. Remaining independent while having a loving relationship with one's husband will avoid these issues and empower them so their confidence grows in all aspects of their life.

Therefore, women should remember that the same way they lived independently while unmarried for decades, they can and should continue

to do so while being married. They do not nor should they become overly dependent on their husbands. A husband will always respect an independent wife more than an excessively needy wife. And it is significantly less likely a husband takes advantage of an independent wife compared to an excessively needy one.

Be Positive

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3645, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims that they should not hate other muslims, even if they possess a negative characteristic they dislike, they will undoubtedly possess other good characteristics they do like.

This is an important principle to act on, especially in marriage. A Muslim should not constantly observe the negative characteristics their spouse possesses. Instead, they should try to concentrate on the positive characteristics they possess. This will improve the relationship between the married couple and in fact, this attitude will improve the relationships between all people. This does not mean one should ignore the sins others commit or not encourage others to better themselves, as this is an aspect of commanding good and forbidding evil, which is a duty on all muslims according to their knowledge. But it means they should not dislike a person for possessing a negative characteristic as they may abandon it with time and because they are bound to possess good characteristics too. They should instead dislike the negative characteristic, not the person. Having this positive mindset will also help those who possess negative characteristics to abandon them. Whereas, if one shows hatred towards others they might not change for the better out of stubbornness.

Best and Worse

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 323, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised who the best and worse people are.

The best person is the one who reminds others of Allah, the Exalted, when they are observed. This in fact, refers to practically implementing the teachings of Islam with sincerity. If one fulfils the teachings of Islam with the incorrect intention Allah, the Exalted, will prevent others from admiring them in the way described in this Hadith. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6705. It advises that Allah, the Exalted, spreads the love or hatred for a person across the world via the Angels. If a Muslim desires love and respect from others it is clear from this Hadith it only lies in the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The worse people are those who cause separation between people and invite others towards sins. It is important for muslims not to behave in such a manner either intentionally or unintentionally. Criticising people in front of others, such as one's relatives, only leads to enmity between people even if one does not intend for this. So it is vital for muslims to only speak about things which concern them and avoid publicly criticising others as this may cause them to become one of the worse people according to this Hadith.

Whoever leads others to sins will only increase their own sins according to how many people act on their invitation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2351. So it is vital for muslims to act on good things and invite others to good as well.

Importance of the Prayer

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that between faith and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Unfortunately, abandoning the obligatory prayers has become very common amongst muslims, especially women, who use extremely bad excuses in order to justify giving up their obligatory prayers, such as having make up on or being at an event when the obligatory prayers occur. Even though establishing the obligatory prayers is obligatory but doing these other things are not obligatory. If a Muslim taking part in a battle cannot abandon the obligatory prayers how can one believe these lame excuses will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day? In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 413, that the first thing that will be questioned about on Judgment Day is the obligatory prayers. If one fails to establish their obligatory prayers they will most likely fail on this Day.

In addition, the Holy Quran has made it clear that establishing the obligatory prayers is the thing which prevents one from falling into a misguided life. Meaning, establishing the obligatory prayers is the first step to having a successful life which will affect every aspect of one's life. If one fails in this duty they will only move from one problem to another. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

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

Cursing

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 316. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that those who curse others will not be witnesses or intercessors on the Day of Judgment. Both these stations are a high rank which the curser will be deprived of.

Muslims, especially women, curse things when they are in a bad mood. This is an evil habit as they are supplicating for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from something or someone. This contradicts the teachings of Islam and the characteristic of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, when he was requested to curse the non-muslims, he replied that he was not sent by Allah, the Exalted, as a curser but as a mercy to mankind. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 321. In addition, the one who supplicates for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to be removed from others will most likely have it removed from them as this contradicts the behaviour of a true believer, who must love for others what they love for themselves according to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4905, that the curse returns back to the one who uttered it if the person or thing they cursed does not deserve it and in most cases they do not. Therefore, muslims should not overlook this sin and ensure they do not curse things as this is not a characteristic of a true Muslim. They should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by desiring and supplicating for the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to descend on all. This will lead to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, to

descend on them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1924.

Keep Things Simple

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 245, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to make things easy and not difficult.

This means, that a Muslim should always lead a simple religious and worldly life. Islam does not demand muslims to overburden themselves in performing righteous deeds but it teaches simplicity. A Muslim should firstly strive to fulfil their obligatory duties, which are undoubtedly within their strength to fulfil as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a Muslim with more than they can bear. This is confirmed in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

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

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

If a Muslim persists on this behaviour, they will be provided with such mercy that they will fulfil all their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and to people and find time to enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world, moderately.

This is how a Muslim makes things easier for themselves. And if they possess dependents, such as children, they should teach them the same thereby, making things easier for them also. Overburdening oneself makes things hard and can push one to quit. Whereas, relaxing too much will make things hard as they will lose out on the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Concealing People

It is important for muslims to act on an important tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is when one criticizes others in order to teach people a lesson, such as criticising one's child in order to teach another child a lesson. It is best not to mention people by name as it can lead to enmity between people, which leads to broken relationships. This contradicts the aim of advising others which is to unite people and improve their obedience to Allah, the Exalted and their behaviour towards other people. Whenever the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, constructively criticised others in order to teach people a lesson he would not name them. One example is found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 430. This is an aspect of concealing the faults of others, which causes Allah, the Exalted, to conceal their faults. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893. The only time it is acceptable to mention people by name is in order to warn others and protect them from harm.

Bad Omens

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 909, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned against paying attention to bad omens as behaving in this manner is like associating something with Allah, the Exalted, meaning, polytheism. Instead one should rely on Allah, the Exalted.

Paying attention to evil omens means that it effects one's behaviour and actions. Even though black magic and the evil eye are real it is important to understand that nothing in the universe from the fluttering of a leaf to the Sun rising occurs without the choice and will of Allah, the Exalted. And if the entire creation tried to make something happen, such as harming someone, they would not be able to achieve it if Allah, the Exalted, did not allow it to occur. Similarly, if the entire creation desired to provide someone with benefit they would not be able to unless Allah, the Exalted, so willed. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Therefore, a Muslim should remain steadfast by not bothering with evil omens or fearing witches and wizards as they cannot cause something which Allah, the Exalted, has not willed from occurring. Instead, one should remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and continue with their lawful actions and choices and only seek protection from evil things according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while fully trusting in the support of Allah, the Exalted. They should not turn to people and things which contradict this as it will only lead to paranoia and trouble, which in most cases is worse than their initial fear.

Lead 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, such as mothers, 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 herself, 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 that Allah, the Exalted, hates this behaviour. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, that a person who commanded good but refrained from it himself and prohibited evil yet acted on it himself will be punished in Hell.

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.

Act Justly

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims to maintain justice in all circumstances. 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...”

This is an important characteristic for all muslims to adopt and to teach their dependents, such as their children. A Muslim must choose the right option in every situation even if this contradicts their own desires or the desires of others. A Muslim should not simply choose the incorrect option just because a dear one is connected to it. Unfortunately, many muslims act a certain way which is not acceptable in Islam yet claim that their family are pleased with it. For example, a Muslim woman will dress inappropriately and claim that her husband is happy with how she dresses. But this is not the just path as her husband will not judge her on Judgment Day only Allah, the Exalted, will. Therefore, they and all muslims should choose the just path which is the path pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, not themselves or others. This does not mean one should fight with others over issues but they should kindly point out the just path to others and remind them that it is their duty to choose it as there is no obedience to the creation if it leads to the disobedience of the Creator.

Muslims must not act according to their own desires nor act to please their relatives and friends out of some misplaced loyalty. They should instead act justly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and choose what pleases Him over all others.

A Balanced Life

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, explains an important lesson for muslims to learn and act upon. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“But seek, through that which Allāh has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world...”

A Muslim is not expected to completely abandon the material world and only concentrate on the hereafter, as the hereafter is gained by utilizing the material world correctly. A Muslim can enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world moderately as long as it does not prevent them from fulfilling their obligatory duties or following the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But a Muslim should not prioritise enjoying these pleasures over preparing for the hereafter. Preparing for the hereafter should be one's top priority and this is achieved by using the blessings one possesses in the correct way according to the teachings of Islam. Lawful pleasures should be enjoyed from time to time in order to recharge one's battery but a person should not persist on this as it will undoubtedly distract them from preparing for the hereafter even if they are lawful things. This is indicated in the middle of this verse where Allah, the Exalted, reminds muslims to remain steadfast on performing righteous deeds while occasionally enjoying the lawful pleasures of this world. Whatever a Muslim chooses to do they will answer for their actions and this is the important thing to constantly bear in mind.

Evil Against Good

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, explains an important lesson for muslims to learn and act upon. 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.”

It is easy to reply evil with evil. But what makes a Muslim special is when they reply evil with good. This is the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to understand that behaving in this manner will never reduce a person's rank in any way. Otherwise the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would not have acted in this way. In fact, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029, advises that when one replies evil with good, such as forgiving others, Allah, the Exalted, raises them in honor. So this attitude does not only benefit others but more importantly it benefits the Muslim themselves.

In addition, as indicated by this verse, if someone adopts this attitude they will find that those who do not treat them well will eventually become ashamed of their actions and change their attitude. Even the most toughest

spiritual hearts eventually become affected when treated in this manner. For example, when a husband mistreats his wife in a minor way then it is best for her to rise above a negative reply and instead reply in a nice manner. This will cause the husband to respect and love his wife more. When a colleague at work shows bad manners, it is best to show them the quality of a true Muslim by replying with good manners. When one behaves like this the people around them will respect and love them more which will cause their life to become easier. But when a person replies evil with evil, they will always face more evil from others and this will only make their life harder in both worlds. This is quite obvious if one reflects over this for a moment. It is important to note, when others exceed the limits then one should defend themselves and detach from the abuser. But even in these cases one should adhere to good character.

Acts of Charity

The following verse of the Holy Quran explains the importance of offering help according to one's means and strength. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 28:

“And if you [must] turn away from them [i.e., the needy] awaiting mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word.”

A Muslim should never believe that one must help others, such as giving charity, in big ways for it to be counted as something significant by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim should remember that every atom's worth of good is recorded and will be rewarded. This is confirmed in chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verse 7:

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

In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has emphasised helping others in anyway, small or big, in countless Hadiths. For example, he advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1956, that even smiling to make another feel comfortable is recorded as an act of charity. Another Hadith found in Sahih Muslim,

number 2342, advises that the reward obtained by donating a single date fruit in charity will be equivalent to a mountain. It is important to note that Islam emphasises all forms of charity including emotional, physical and financial aid.

Therefore, muslims should always help others according to their capacity. No one can claim they do not have the ability to give some sort of charity as all things, big or small, are accepted by Allah, the Exalted.

Ambassadors of Islam

It is a duty on all muslims to represent Islam in the correct and best way. This duty is even more important in modern times as Islam is often shown to be a bad religion when it is far from this. The following verse of the Holy Quran points out some characteristics all muslims should adopt so that the rest of the world can observe the true and peaceful teachings of Islam. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 125:

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

The first thing is that a Muslim should possess wisdom. This means that they should not only obtain knowledge on Islam but practically implement it in their life. They should not preach to others what they do not practice themselves. This type of knowledge is not beneficial as it will have minimal impact on the character and beliefs of others. Those who affect others do so because they act on their knowledge. This is true beneficial knowledge.

This verse also indicates one should provide good instruction to others. This again highlights the importance of leading by example, as this is the best way to instruct others.

Whenever a Muslim converses about worldly or religious matters they should do so with knowledge and respect. A person should be able to recognize the good manners Islam teaches through the speech of a Muslim. They should use kind and gentle words and never resort to harsh or vulgar speech. The muslims who behave in such a manner only cause others to believe Islam teaches this type of behaviour. And it will encourage the Muslim youth to behave in a similar fashion. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to always speak in a kind and respectful manner in every aspect of their life.

Muslims should realise that they are all representatives of Islam so it is their duty to behave in a manner which befits this noble status as they will be held accountable for this on Judgment Day.

Assumptions

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, warns muslims to avoid negative assumptions about others, as they can lead to sins, such as backbiting, slandering and lying. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

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

It is important to act on this advice especially, in this day and age of social media. A single negative assumption can easily spread to others and cause problems for the people involved. It is always best to interpret things in a positive way as long there is room to do so. Only when the evidence is overwhelming and clear can a negative assumption be accepted but even then it is best to mind one's business and avoid discussing it. This will help one to make their Islam excellent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3976.

If the assumption is connected to a person, such as one's dependents, then they should address the issue in a kind way in order to find out the real truth instead of jumping to conclusions, as this often causes further problems.

In addition, Muslims should always protect their fellow muslims by avoiding situations where negative assumptions can be made about them. This is an excellent characteristic to adopt, as one protects others from potential sins. It is hoped that the one who protects others from sins will be protected by Allah, the Exalted, from sins and their evil consequences in both worlds.

Daughters

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 78, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave glad tidings of Paradise to the parents who correctly raise two daughters. It is surprising how many muslims, especially Asians, always desire sons and have adopted the ignorant mentality of not being as pleased when they have daughters even though, the glad tidings mentioned in this Hadith and many others have not been given regarding sons. It is acceptable to believe that a parent would stress more over a daughter than a son, especially in this day and age, but none the less, it does not mean Muslim parents should be less happy if they have a daughter instead of a son. They should remember that their duty is to educate and guide their children according to the teachings of Islam and not stress over their destiny as this is not in their control.

Disliking having daughters is an ignorant mentality which completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, disliking having daughters is the attitude of polytheists and one should avoid their characteristics at all costs. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verses 58-59:

“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed...”

Muslim should avoid adopting this mentality and instead be content with any child they are given, as there are plenty of married couples who do not have any children.

Do Not Spy

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, commands muslims not to spy on each other. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“...And do not spy...”

This is when a person purposely enquires about people or a thing in order to find out things which do not concern them. This behaviour only leads to further sins, such as backbiting and slandering. In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6064, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, specifically ordered muslims not to spy on one another and indicated that it prevents muslims living in harmony. This habit will always block a Muslim from perfecting their faith as one cannot achieve this without staying away from things which do not concern them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317.

Spying causes one to uncover the faults of others which according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2546, leads to the exposure of one's own faults and their public disgrace.

It is therefore better for a Muslim to concentrate on things which concern them, such as rectifying their own faults. And the same way a Muslim would dislike people spying on them they should not spy on others.

Gentle Speech

In the following verses of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, commands the Holy Prophets Musa and Haroon, peace be upon them, to speak to the enemy of Allah, the Exalted, Pharaoh, with gentle words. 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 [Allāh].”

This is an important aspect of speech which must be adopted by a successful Muslim. It should be used in all aspects of life. It is important to understand that speaking kindly benefits the speaker more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and through gentle speech protect themselves from Hell, as words are the main cause of people entering Hell according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3973, but it benefits the speaker in worldly affairs also. For example, the wife who speaks kindly to her husband will find that her husband will love and respect her more than if she uses harsh words. There is a much greater chance a wife will have her requests fulfilled by her husband if she uses kind speech. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are spoken to kindly. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who speaks kindly to them. The examples are endless. Very rarely are harsh words needed. In most cases, kind speech will be much more effective than harsh words.

A Muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they speak to be worse than Pharaoh, therefore, they should follow the command in this verse and speak kindly to whoever they interact with if they desire to affect others in a positive way and achieve the things they desire in this world and the next.

Maintain Ties

It is important for a Muslim to always maintain ties with people, both relatives and non-relatives, as this is a very important duty on all muslims. There are many verses and Hadiths indicating this, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1909, which warns that the one who severs ties with a relative will not enter Paradise. Meaning, if a Muslim severs ties over a worldly reason.

Even if another person misbehaves, a muslim should warn them and encourage them towards sincere repentance. They should hate their negative behaviour but not hate the person, as there is always a chance they may sincerely repent. They should only turn away from this person if they remain steadfast on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. But even then, they should always show kindness and respect to them. And in cases when they need help, muslims should help according to their means, as this act of kindness may be the reason they turn back to Allah, the Exalted, in sincere obedience.

A Muslim should never turn away from a person over a worldly reason as this behaviour is deadly. One should instead strive to perfect their faith by only loving, hating, giving and withholding for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4681.

Spreading Gossip

In the following verse of the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, warns muslims not to listen to nor spread gossip about others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 15:

“When you received it with your tongues and said with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge and thought it was insignificant while it was, in the sight of Allāh, tremendous.”

Unfortunately, this has become a very common characteristic found amongst muslims today. Not only do people do this in person but it is now done over social media. It is important for muslims not to listen to gossip by warning those who gossip to them. If others persist they should not continue accompanying them as one is judged by the company they keep. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. This means one will adopt the characteristics of their companion. If one accompanies gossipers, in most cases, they too will become one. Also it is important to understand, that the one who gossips to a person will undoubtedly gossip about them to others as well. A Muslim should therefore advise others not to gossip. They should not accept the gossip as true nor should they act on it or struggle to find out if it is true. They should simply ignore it.

In addition, a Muslim should never gossip themselves as it mainly consists of sins, such as backbiting and slander. All of which are major sins which can take one to Hell if Allah, the Exalted and their victim do not forgive them. This is indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Finally, Muslims should not spread information within society even if they desire to warn others of a danger without first confirming that the report is true. This has been made clear in chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 6 of the Holy Quran:

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

One should not simply forward information without confirming it is authentic as this may be considered a sin and it will only cause distress to others. So instead of helping others, this person only causes further problems.

The Best People

In the following verse of the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, explains that a person is not judged better than others because of their social status, wealth or any other worldly thing. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

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

What makes a Muslim better than others is their piety. This is when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A Muslim should therefore never look down on other people believing their worldly possessions makes them better or superior in any way. Unfortunately, many muslims have adopted this mentality by acting on the cultural practices of non-muslims by creating casts and brotherhoods. They join families through marriage based on these cultural practices instead of basing their decision on the teachings of Islam. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned muslims in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, that a person should not get married for certain reasons including for the sake of lineage. They should only get married for the sake of piety. Adhering to these made up cultural practices has caused the divorce rate amongst muslims to increase over time. Therefore, a Muslim should strive to be better than others

through adopting and increasing their piety. But they should never become proud of whatever level they reach as pride will destroy their piety and it will lead to them to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

Treat Children Equally

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4185, the importance of treating children equally is stressed. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even indicated that if a parent desires to be honoured by their children equally they should treat them equally. Meaning, what one gives is what they shall receive.

Therefore, parents should not make the mistake of publicly preferring one child over another as this only leads to enmity and fractured relationships. They should strive to treat them equally, such as buying them gifts. The only time it may be acceptable to buy gifts for one child only is on special occasions, such as birthdays. Parents should never openly criticise one child in front of their siblings neither should they compare their children in behaviour publicly as this will also lead to enmity between siblings.

In fact, this attitude should be applied to all relationships. When a person treats people justly then they will find they too are treated with justice by others. This attitude will always strengthen the ties between people especially within families.

Treating Others Kindly

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 119, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a woman who performed much voluntary worship and fasting will go to Hell because of the harm she caused others through her speech. Conversely, a woman who fulfilled her obligatory duties and gave little voluntary charity and treated others well will go to Paradise.

Unfortunately, many muslims believe their voluntary righteous deeds will save them from punishment even though they commit sins against others, such as backbiting and slandering. It is important to learn that the one who behaves in such a manner is only giving away their righteous deeds to others through sinning against them even though they might believe they will obtain bliss through their voluntary righteous deeds. Justice will be established on Judgment Day and those who wronged others will lose their good deeds and gain the sins of their victims. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Muslims should remember this and concentrate more on treating others with respect just how they would like others to treat them before they strive in voluntary righteous deeds.

Trusts

In the following verses of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned that the true believers are those who fulfil their promises and trusts. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 1-8:

“Certainly will the believers have succeeded...And they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive.”

To break one's promise without a valid reason is a sign of hypocrisy according to a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 5023. Therefore muslims must fulfil their promises made with Allah, the Exalted, which is to live in obedience to Him by following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and fulfil their promises to people. It is important to note, a parent must always fulfil their promises to their children. If they do not then they are only teaching their children that breaking promises is acceptable in Islam. It is a duty of a parent to teach their children good manners.

Fulfilling one's trusts is another important characteristic of a successful believer. A Muslim should not only take care of a trust given by people but more importantly a Muslim should safeguard the trusts given to them by Allah, the Exalted. Every blessing they possess, including their own body and family, are trusts which must be fulfilled. The best way to do this is by

using each blessing according to the teachings of Islam. This is what people will be questioned about on Judgment Day.

Use Your Energy

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, reminds muslims to correctly use the resources they have been given, such as their physical strength, in order to perform righteous deeds and not simply rely on others to help them. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.”

This applies to both worldly and religious affairs as it is common knowledge that a person, in most cases, only gains something good in this world when they work for it. Similarly, a Muslim will gain good in the hereafter when they strive for it. There is no doubt that certain things will benefit muslims even after they pass away, such as charity given on their behalf. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2760. But solely relying on others to help a Muslim in both worldly and religious matters is not the correct mentality to possess. This was not the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, muslims should not simply attend a few religious gatherings a month without striving to change for the better expecting to be saved by them. This is not the way of the righteous predecessors.

A Muslim should therefore strive to benefit themselves through sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not remain heedless to preparing for the hereafter before they reach the Great Day, empty handed.

Standards For Women

In the following verse of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, explains an important teaching of Islam namely, the most honourable and best person is the one who possesses the most piety. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“O mankind...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you...”

This is when one strives to fulfil the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refrains from His prohibitions and faces destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unfortunately, the Devil has tricked many women into debating the status of women compared to men. Even though, Islam has granted women such honour as no other institution or faith ever has, such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman, namely one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife the best. There are countless other examples. But the point to note, is that women should not be bothered about comparing themselves to men as this is not what Allah, the Exalted, desires. Instead, women should strive to adopt piety and if they achieve it than they will be superior to every man or woman who possesses less piety than them. This is the benchmark which separates who is superior. And it is clear from this verse that it is not only restricted to men.

If one turns the pages of history they will observe great female muslims who concentrated on this important task instead of arguing and debating about the differences between men and women. And as a result they became better than the vast majority of men and women. Even if Muslim women were granted all the rights they dreamed of even then, it would not make them superior to others until they adopted piety this is quite evident when one observes the news and those who behave as they please. And this reality will be made crystal clear in the next world. Therefore, if a Muslim desires to be superior to others they should seek it in piety, not in arguing and debates.

True Richness

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4137, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that true richness does not lie with many worldly possessions but it lies with being pleased and content with life.

It is important for muslims to understand that being content and truly rich is not connected with how much wealth or worldly things, such as clothes, they possess. In fact, the happiness one obtains from buying something new, like new shoes, often passes away after a few days and the desire to obtain happiness from something else begins to play on their mind. This desire to have more makes someone needy, which is another word for poor. A rich person on the other hand is satisfied with what they possess. This is the person who is not needy and therefore, rich.

This does not mean a person should not desire or obtain worldly things. It means they should not search for true happiness in those things. In order to maintain this attitude especially, during difficult times, a Muslim should act on the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513, which advises that a Muslim should observe those who possess less than them in order to avoid becoming ungrateful and it prevents impatience during difficulties as well.

Visiting the Sick

There are many Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the virtue of visiting others especially the sick. For example, a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 969, advises that the one who visits the sick, for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in the morning, will be blessed by seventy thousand Angels until the evening, and the same occurs in the evening and they are granted a garden in Paradise.

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 doing it so their relatives do not criticise them, then they will lose out on the reward.

In addition, they should fulfil the etiquettes and conditions of visiting someone according to the teachings of Islam in order to obtain their reward. For example, in respect to the sick, they should not stay long thereby causing trouble to the sick person and their relatives. They should control their actions and speech so that they avoid all types of sins, such as gossiping, backbiting and slandering others. They should encourage the sick to be patient and discuss the rewards associated with it and generally discuss beneficial matters in respect to the world and the hereafter. 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 behave. 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.”

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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