

Intention. Sincerity & Truthfulness

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Achieve Noble Character

Intention, Sincerity & Truthfulness

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Intention, Sincerity & Truthfulness

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

Compiler's Notes

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

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

Introduction

The following short book discusses Three Aspects of Noble Character: Intention, Sincerity and Truthfulness.

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.

Intention, Sincerity & Truthfulness

Intention & Sincerity - 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

An aspect of being sincere to Allah, the Exalted, is to trust that His decrees and choices are best for the people involved, even if the wisdoms behind His decrees are not obvious to people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

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

To only be pleased with the decrees that suit one's desires and become upset at the decrees which contradict one's desires is clear insincerity to Allah, the Exalted. The one who maintains sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through every situation and state is truly the sincere one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Intention & Sincerity - 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

Intention & Sincerity - 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

Intention & Sincerity - 4

In a Divine Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6833, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever does a good deed will have a minimum of ten times reward.

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward like this Hadith, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills...”

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is, the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

Intention & Sincerity - 5

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward, as this muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds, he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is

when one publicly recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publicly can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech and actions.

Intention & Sincerity - 6

I had a thought which I wanted to share. 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.

Intention & Sincerity - 7

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over one of the main reasons why people who do good things, such as buying gifts for others, do not receive the same level of respect and love from people than some who do not do these things. This outcome occurs as a result of their intention. When these people perform righteous deeds in respect to people, such as visiting the sick, they do so either for the sake of people meaning, to please them or they mix this intention by also aiming to please Allah, the Exalted. First of all, the one who acts for the sake of people will gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. They will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Scholars are divided on whether those who mix their intention by aiming to please Allah, the Exalted, and people will receive a partial reward or none at all. In order to be on the safe side a wise Muslim should only act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

On the other hand, the other people who gain more respect and love from others do so because they solely act for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. When they treat others kindly they do not do it for the sake of people. Because of their sincerity Allah, the Exalted, places more love and respect in the hearts of the people compared to those who do more acts of kindness to people but are less sincere in their deeds.

So if people desire reward from Allah, the Exalted, and respect from people they should correct their intention and only perform righteous deeds for the

sake of Allah, the Exalted. One sign of this correct intention is that this person will aim to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it displeases people. Meaning, they do not pay attention to the attitude and reactions of people.

Intention & Sincerity - 8

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on how a celebrity was standing up for women's rights. Undoubtedly, it is a good cause, as honouring women has been taught by Islam even though some muslims fail to act on these teachings. The thing that came to mind is that many people have come and gone who have stood up for some sort of cause, whether it was to do with women's rights, human rights, the poor, or something else, yet only a small per cent of these people had a positive impact on society. The majority had no positive effect and instead became footnotes in history. One of the reasons for this is a lack of sincerity. If one turns the pages of history they will observe that those who acted with the correct intention meaning, to truly benefit society without any ulterior motives, were granted success, even if they were not muslims. Benefit to others is something Allah, the Exalted, loves and He therefore grants success to all those who sincerely strive for this end.

Those who did not achieve a positive effect on society lacked this good intention as they desired something else, such as fame. In most cases, their bad intention is quite evident, as their words and actions clearly contradict each other. For example, some claim to stand up for the rights of women, then happily take part in advertising campaigns which show women to be nothing except ornaments to be gawked at. If their actions supported their claims they would have instead taught the advertising companies that a woman's intelligence, good character and inner strength are what should be displayed to the world through their advertising campaigns.

Many of these people who claim to stand up for different causes are in a position of political and social influence and they possess much wealth yet, their positive influence on society is minimal and very short lived. On the other hand, those who may not have possessed such influence, changed the attitude of millions through their sincerity. They only desired to benefit society; they did not seek anything else. Because of their sincerity their positive influence and remembrance endured long after they departed this world whereas, those whose intention was corrupt, were quickly forgotten even while they were still alive.

So if one desires to succeed in the material world or more importantly in matters of faith, they should strive to correct their intention. It is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, judges people based on their intention. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

Intention & Sincerity - 9

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the different life aims and goals of people and how they worked in order to achieve them.

It is important for muslims to understand a key concept in Islam. Namely, there is nothing wrong with desiring lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, but it is best to avoid worshipping and obeying Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain them. This is because these types of muslims often only worship Allah, the Exalted, and inhabit the Mosques when they desire worldly things. But if they do not receive them they become impatient and fed up which causes them to stop obeying Allah, the Exalted. Or if they obtain them, then the joy of them often makes them turn away from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as they achieved what they desired and therefore do not need to obey Allah, the Exalted, anymore. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 83:

“When We grant people Our favours, they turn away, acting arrogantly. But when touched with evil, they lose all hope.”

These muslims worship Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they obey Allah, the Exalted, only when it suits their desires. And because of this attitude they are in danger of becoming misguided. 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. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

These muslims may claim that they are worshipping Allah, the Exalted, but in reality, they are only worshipping their own desires and the gifts and blessings they receive.

It is praiseworthy to worship Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain religious blessings, such as Paradise, as this has been recommended by Islamic teachings. But it is far superior to worship Allah, the Exalted, as He is the only One worthy of it and because the creation are His servants.

If a muslim must desire gifts and blessings, then it is best to aim for religious blessings, as aiming for worldly blessings can shift a person's intention so that they end up worshipping the gift instead of the Giver.

Intention & Sincerity - 10

I watched a news report a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on a high ranking government official of Saudi Arabia discussing a potential plan the Saudi government was considering. It was considering completely opening the Visa applications so that people can perform the visitation to the holy city of Mecca, known as Umra, all year round. Currently, the Visas available are restricted to certain times in the year.

Even though, this is a good plan and should be carried out, what was surprising was their intention for considering this plan. As the oil prices have been dropping over the years and the fact that the oil will eventually run out, the Saudi government is taking steps by investing in other business opportunities all over the world in order to ensure they stay rich. Even though, this is not prohibited in Islam but the thing which is surprising is that their only reason for potentially allowing pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round, was to gain more wealth. This intention, the news report made very clear. It was very surprising as muslims should know the very famous Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. It advises that the actions of a person are judged based on their intention. If their intention behind their decision is only to gain more wealth then they will get no reward from Allah, the Exalted. The only thing they will gain is more wealth, which will eventually slip out of their hands. But if they intended to allow pilgrims to journey to Mecca all year round for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, more people would worship Allah, the Exalted, and gain countless good deeds, then they would have gained reward for their plan in both this world and in the next, as well as gained the wealth they wanted.

In addition, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4899, advises that whoever invites someone to something good gets the same reward as the one who performed the righteous action they were invited towards. This means, if the Saudi government intended to please Allah, the Exalted, with their plan they would have got the same reward gained by every single person who performed the visitation meaning, Umra, simply because they invited them to perform this deed by extending the Visas to all year round. Can one imagine how much reward they would get while sitting in their homes?

The lesson to learn from this is simple. When one acts for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, by adhering to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will gain blessings in both worlds. But if they act for the sake of the world, they might gain something from the world but they will receive nothing in the hereafter. So it is important to think before acting as one can potentially lose an uncountable reward just because of their bad intention.

Intention & Sincerity - 11

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, loving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, includes loving the things Allah, the Exalted, loves, such as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This love must be practically shown by learning and acting on these two sources of guidance and attaching oneself to the other things beloved to Allah, the Exalted, such as righteous deeds and the Mosques.

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

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

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

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

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

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

To conclude, adopting these characteristics leads to perfection of faith, as they are based on one's emotions and are therefore extremely difficult to control. This control is best achieved when one obtains certainty of faith. This is achieved when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge. Certainty of faith helps to direct one's intention, focus and actions to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This will aid one in controlling the four aspects mentioned in the main Hadith. In addition, whoever is blessed with controlling them will find fulfilling the other duties of Islam easier. These duties consist of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the key to peace and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Intention & Sincerity - 12

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Muslims are often rightly advised the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And how knowledge which is not acted on has little to no benefit in either this world or the next. A further important point needs to be understood on this topic. If one desires to be rightly guided, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, they must adopt a sincere attitude. Meaning, the only one who will be rightly guided by Islamic teachings is the one who comes to this knowledge with the intention to completely accept and act on it according to their best effort, without cherry picking what teachings to accept and act and what teachings to ignore, according to their desires. One must submit, accept and act on all the teachings, irrespective of how much it contradicts their desires, to the best of their ability. The truth is that there will always be teachings from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that will weigh heavily on a person, as it contradicts their desires and attitude. This is because everyone has an inner devil which dislikes being contradicted. Only when one sincerely tries to submit to these teachings, the teachings which contradict their desires, will they obtain right guidance. Cherry picking what to follow or ignore is what caused the misguidance of the past nations and it will prevent a Muslim from obtaining peace and success in both worlds. Just like people take bitter medicine, despite disliking it, knowing it is good for them, one must accept and act on all the teachings of Islam despite their desires being contradicted, knowing it is best for them. Allah, the Exalted, does not expect nor demand perfection but peace and success cannot be obtained until one approaches the teachings of Islam with sincerity and the intention to accept and act on all of it according to their ability, irrespective of how difficult that may be to do. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

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

Intention & Sincerity - 13

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Even though performing spiritual exercises based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are praiseworthy, it is important for a Muslim to avoid engrossing themselves in spiritual exercises which are not advised in the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid those done in order to obtain worldly things. This was not the behaviour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Behaving in this manner encourages one to treat the treasury of Allah, the Exalted, like a shop where one buys worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in exchange for some spiritual exercises. This is a highly disrespectful and insincere attitude to adopt, as the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are not credit cards which can be used to purchase worldly things, such as a child or a visa. One must instead know their place and behave as a sincere slave of Allah, the Exalted, and not act as a customer in His divine court. They should sincerely obey Him by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him.

One is allowed to ask for lawful worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, in a way endorsed by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, but must avoid other ways, as it leads to misusing the two sources of guidance and adopting a customer type attitude towards Allah, the Exalted. The aim of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are to guide mankind on how to live and use their worldly blessings correctly so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds.

When one ignores this purpose and instead uses them as a credit card to purchase worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, it will only take them further from peace and right guidance and into the hands of con artists who claim they can help others gain worldly things through spiritual exercises. Ignoring this primary function is as aimless as someone who buys a car with many features, such as air conditioning, yet the car cannot be driven as it is missing an engine.

Intention & Sincerity - 14

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. Most Muslims understand the importance of having a good intention, as it is the foundation of Islam. Allah, the Exalted, judges the actions of people based on their intention. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. But one important aspect is often overlooked by Muslims. The fact that having a good intention, especially towards others, is not good enough, as a good intention must also be supported by good actions, otherwise one's good intention becomes fruitless. For example, one cannot steal from the rich in order to give to the poor. Even if their intention is to help the needy for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, their action will not be accepted, as the action is unlawful in Islam.

Unfortunately, when dealing with other people, Muslims often overlook this fact. They often advise others towards certain lawful actions without thinking about the consequences of them nor understanding the reality that the actions are not in the best interest of the person they are advising. Instead of taking these important things into consideration before advising towards certain actions, these people often rely on their good intention towards others and press ahead without deliberation. For example, a parent may encourage their child to marry their relative or a family friend, simply because of the relationship between the two families, instead of taking other important aspects into consideration, such as whether that person will make a suitable spouse for their child. The parent simply relies on their good intention towards their child, which in reality, prevents them from acting with sincerity towards their child, according to the teachings of Islam. No one doubts that the parent wants their child to have a successful and happy marriage but this good intention is not enough according to the

teachings of Islam. The parent must take into consideration other factors, such as suitability for their child, before moving forward with their intention.

Another example, is when one tries to learn and act on Islamic knowledge and are heavily criticized by their relatives. Each relative has a good intention towards them yet this deludes and prevents them from observing that what the person is doing is good and beneficial. By solely relying on their good intention towards their relative and failing to assess the situation correctly, they end up hindering them from good.

A good intention is simply not good enough, one must support their good intention with good and thought-out actions. This is one of the reasons why people have said that the path to Hell is paved with good intentions, as people make errors in judgement in respect to themselves and others and solely rely on a good intention for a successful outcome. The root of this behaviour is ignorance. One must avoid this attitude by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they adopt and implement a good intention which is supported by good, sincere and well thought-out actions.

Intention & Sincerity - 15

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. The truth is that each worshipper of false deities only worships their own desires. Their deities are just a physical manifestation of their desires which they worship. This is obvious as a person who worships a deity in the form of an idol knows that the lifeless idol cannot command them to live their life a certain way so the worshiper themselves decide how they imagine their lifeless idol would like them to live. And this code of conduct is based on nothing but their own desires. Therefore, their worship of their desires is the root of their worship. The influential and rich are more drowned in this mentality as they are aware that accepting the truth meaning, Islam, will force them to live according to a specific code of conduct which will prevent them from acting on their misguided desires. They advise others to follow them as they do not wish to lose their influence and authority. This is why history as shown they were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This attitude has nothing to do with Islam being the right or wrong religion based on clear evidence, it is simply about fulfilling one's desires.

Truthfulness - 1

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

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

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

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

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

Truthfulness - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that lying is an aspect of hypocrisy. Lying is unacceptable whether it is a small lie, which is often called a white lie, or when one lies as a joke. All of these types of lying are forbidden. In fact, the one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive someone, has been cursed three times in one Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315.

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

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

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

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

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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