

Taqwa (piety or righteousness)

All praise are due to Allah (s.w.t) and I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah (s.w.t) and I bear witness that Mohammad (s.a.w) is His Servant and Messenger.

Brothers and Sisters in Islam!

Taqwa (piety or righteousness) is with no doubt the base, the foundation of ones rank and status with Allah (s.w.t). Taqwa determines how near and how far a person is from Allah (s.w.t) regardless of what people may think of him or how they rate him. Therefore, a Muslim should not get his verdict on others upon their looks, wealth or place in society. A mistake can be easily made if the depth is not tested.

The following Hadith may shed some light on this issue. Reported by Imam Al-Bukhari (r.a), Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sa'idi (r.a) relates that:

“a man passed by the Prophet (s.a.w) so he asked another man who was sitting near him: ‘What is your opinion about this man?’ The man replied: ‘He is one of the noblest men. By Allah (s.w.t)! He is certainly worthy that if he should propose marriage (ask for the hand of a girls in marriage) his proposal should be accepted. If he should intercede (meditate) his intercession should prove effective (fruitful).’ The Prophet (s.a.w) remained silent (made no comments on this). Then another man passed. The Prophet (s.a.w) asked (his companion): ‘What is your opinion about this man (how do you esteem this one)?’ He replied: ‘O Messenger of Allah (s.w.t)! He is one of the poor Muslims. If he were to propose (for marriage) his proposal would not be accepted. If he were to intercede on behalf of someone, his intercession would be rejected and if he were to speak he would not be listened to.’ At this, the Messenger of Allah (s.w.t) said: ‘He (the latter) is better than the former by earthfulls’”-Riyad 253

Brothers and Sisters,

The main aim of this Hadith is to alert believers not to be deceived by what people seem to be. Do not judge until you search and be sure. Do not look down on those who do not possess materialistic worldly things. As a believer, you should always be, as the Prophet (s.a.w) said, alerted, intelligent and smart.

And as our Ulama'a (our scholars) said: ‘This Hadith contains the following important point: the distinction and greatness of such poor Muslims who are neither known in society because due to their poverty, nor are they respected by people. But due to their Faith and piety, each of them is better in the sight of Allah (s.w.t) than others. This Hadith makes it abundantly clear that what really matters with Allah (s.w.t) is Faith and piety and not lineage nor pomp and show.’-Riyad 1/250

That is indeed, why we find the Qur'an telling Allah's (s.w.t) Messenger (s.a.w) to be close and sit with those who are near to Allah (s.w.t) even though they may be poor.

Allah (s.w.t) says in Surat Al-Kahf –meaning-:

“And keep yourself (O Mohammad?) patiently (content) with those who call on their Lord morning and evening seeking His face and let not your eyes look over them (pass beyond them) seeking the pomp and glitter of the life of this world nor obey any whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and desires and his affair has become all excess (all lost).”-18/28

Ibn-Kathir (r.a) said in his Tafsir:

“meaning: sit with those who remember Allah (s.w.t), who say ‘La Ilaha Illallah’, who praise Him, glorify Him, declare His greatness, and call on Him morning and evening, all the servants of Allah (s.w.t) whether rich or poor, strong or weak. Do not favour others over them, meaning: do not seek the people of nobility and wealth instead of them. ‘...and obey not him whose heart we have made heedless of Our remembrance...’, means: those who are distracted by this world from being committed to the religion and from worshipping their Lord. ‘...and whose affair (deeds) has been lost...’, means: his actions and deeds are a foolish waste of time. Do not obey him or admire his way or envy what he has.”-Tafsir 1, pg.143-145
