

Summary



Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) gave a discourse on further six **obstacles to reform ones actions**



These include; to focus on short term gains, Bad habits, Family ties, Complacency, Love of God is overcome by other loves, Lack of family commitment



Deeds and practices of this world can be regarded as riding a galloping horse. If the rider does not control his horse properly and establish a firm grip, he will fall over.



We need to be successful in our deeds. For this we will have to define our boundaries and limits, we need to invest time, energy and effort to strengthen the structure of our faith and bring our deeds and practices in line with our creed.

**obstacles to
reform ones
actions**

Focus on short
term gains

Habits

Family

Complacency

Love of God is
overcome by
other loves

Lack of family
commitment

Ways to
reformation

Self-reflection

The concept of
four wall

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih took forward the theme of self reformation. He gave a discourse on further six **obstacles to reformation of practice** with reference to a sermon of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him).

To regards some sins are small and insignificant

The effect of environment at home and society

To focus on short term gains and forget about the Hereafter

Bad habits

Family ties

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Love of God is overcome by other loves

Lack of family commitment

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The third obstacle to reformation of practice is to only focus on matters that are relevant in the short-term.

Matters of faith and creed are long-term and relate to the Hereafter.

For the short term gain and pleasure, people forget the matters of faith, regarding these as distant and far-removed matters.

A person may have the impression that engaging in sinful practice may not interfere with their belief in the Unity of God.

For example a jeweller may adulterate his pure gold to increase his profit margin, believing that this immoral act of deception and theft will have no impact on his faith.

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People usually look upon practising teachings of a Prophet of God and salvation etc. as a remote matter.

Their worldly needs stand in the way of their practises and the lure of immediate gains make them forget long-term benefits.

By way of example Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) illustrated a case of back-biting, which is a big sin.

If one is mistreated by one's superior officer, to take revenge, one could be tempted to engage in back biting and gossip about the superior officer to the boss of superior officer overstating his negative points and short comings.

Here, the appeal of a short term gain tempts one to commit the heinous sin of back biting.

Thus people commit sins to gain worldly benefits

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The fourth obstacle to practical reformation is 'habit'.

Habit impacts on one's practice.

It is possible to implement some practical reformation based on the laws of the government.

Where religion and government define reformation of practices in the same way, habits can be reformed because of rules and regulation

Unfortunately, certain matters which demand reformation are not considered immoral by the state.

When the law does not lend a hand in reformation of practices, weaknesses of practice can become a toxin for the society.

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As we see many weaknesses of practice in the developed world which are now spreading across the world because of the electronic media.

Those who are brought up in this environment, being a part of this milieu, reflexively adopt some of its weaknesses.

Young men and women are impulsively inclined to these weaknesses...

... and once habits are formed, it becomes difficult to shake them off.

Khalifatul Masih (aba) gave the example of addiction, which is so hard to give up. People can give up a life-long creed without withdrawal symptoms but find it difficult to give up an addiction of few months or years.

People accept our Jama'at having forsaken their families, even their wives and children but find it hard to give up the habit of smoking,

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Sometimes habit can disgrace you. for example habit of smoking took some early Ahmadis to places in Qadian where they had to sit and listen to the rude words being said about the Promised Messiah (as) while fulfilling their addiction of smoking.

- Then there are people in habit of telling lies and using swear words.
- These days, people are in habit of watching unsuitable films and programmes on TV and internet.
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- People who have become solid in their bad habits, their reformation is difficult but not impossible..

God commands to advice and even if there is an iota of faith in someone, advice works.

If man tries, a sense of remorse can be regenerated.

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The fifth cause of impediment to reformation of practice is family: wife and children.

Because of family pressures, people give in to the sins such as bribery, giving false witness, deception and usurping trusts of orphans .

Regrettably these matters also come out in Ahmadi society from time to time

Some parents do not teach their daughters appropriate way to behave towards their husbands, and encourage unreasonable behaviour.

Although Islam teaches that a wife should pay the dues of her husband and look after her home.

Love and emotions can become a hindrance in reformation of practice; the love of God should supersede all other loves

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The sixth cause of impediment in reformation of practice is that man does not constantly watch himself.

- We should weigh out the consequences of everything we do.
- We should reflect whether what we are doing is permissible or not.
- We should be mindful that the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) told us there are 700 commandments in the Holy Qur'an to be abided by.

For example there is the important commandment of truth and honesty which a shopkeeper, a labourer and everyone else should abide by within their sphere of life.

Ahmadis in all fields of life should be honest and for this it is important to constantly remind oneself.

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Deeds and practices of this world can be regarded as riding a galloping horse. If the rider does not control his horse properly and establish a firm grip, he will fall over.

A true believer has to be mindful of the appropriateness of their action all the time.

Keeping an eye on everything in every matter is the step in the right direction.

Once a person is inclined to evil, he is doomed.

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Giving the example of how one wrong, leads to another, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih explained.

It is only to follow fashion and trends that some younger women have given up purdah.

Some young women in Australia, gave up purdah and then had to pile on the lies to their elders by saying that it was a crime to do Purdah in Australia!

Purdah is being abandoned because the Quranic commandment is not often reminded and it is not spoken about in families.

Thus, it is very important for reformation of practice to continually mention what is wicked and what is virtuous.

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The seventh obstacle to reformation of practice is that human relations and customs/conducts gain upper hand and fear and love of God is diminished.

Sometimes greed, friendship, relationship, conflict, rancour and malice do not let one do good deeds.

Sometime the motive to do good deeds is not to obey the commandment of God, but to be judged good by others.

God has ordained to speak the truth but some view it with the perspective of whether or not speaking the truth will cause any harm to him or his friends and family.

This weakness in practice is because fear and love of God is absent from hearts.

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The eighth obstruction to reformation of practice is lack of engagement of the whole family.



For example, honesty cannot be complete unless the entire family is honest, especially in cases of extended family living together.



God states: '**...save yourselves and your family from a Fire...**' (66:7). If one does not save one's family, one day the family would cause ruin.



Everyone in the family should make an effort but the head of the family has an important role to play.

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Apart from these eight causes, there could be other matters that interfere with our practical reformation.



However, if pondered upon these eight causes cover everything.

In summary, many obstacles cause man to falter on the way of God.



... and for this attention is needed.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) gave an example of an excellent European orator, whose lectures tended to lose their impact because of his habit of making strong gestures of shrugging his shoulder. To overcome his weakness, he resorted to a great method: He suspended two swords from the ceiling, the tips of the swords reached just to his shoulders. When practicing his lecture, if he shrugged his shoulders the sharp tip of the sword will help him focus and finally he got over his habit of shrugging shoulders while talking

In order to adopt good practices such methods should be utilised by each one of us; this effort cannot be made without sacrifices.

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Each member of the Jama'at needs to self-reflect, make sacrifice and make a firm pledge.

It has been stated earlier that we have triumphed as regards faith and creed, however, our practices and deeds are lacking.

We do not have the spirit that would make it impossible to reject the strength of our model and practices.

Rather than influencing others with our excellent models, we are copying them!

We need to be successful in our deeds. For this we will have to define our boundaries and limits, we need to invest time, energy and effort to strengthen the structure of our faith and bring our deeds and practices in line with our creed.

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Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) has encapsulated this rather splendidly in these few words:

- ‘Up till now there are only two walls of faith/creed. We have not yet made the two walls of practice/deeds.
- This is why a thief can come in and steal our property.
 - When, as a result of sacrifice we will complete our four walls, the thief’s entry will be prevented.’

Today we need to pledge to bring about pious reformation in ourselves. May God enable us to do so!