

In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

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Author's Introduction

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of ourselves and the evils of our actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is His slave and Messenger.

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam with complete submission to Allah." (3:102)

"O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person and from him He created many men and women and fear Allah through whom you demand your mutual rights and the wombs of kinship. Surely Allah is Ever an All Watcher over you." (4:1)

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and always speak the truth, He will direct you to do righteous deeds and will forgive you your sins, and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great achievement." (33:70-1)

Verily the most truthful speech is the Book of Allah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. The most evil of matters are those which are newly invented, every novelty is an innovation and every innocation is in the Fire. To proceed:

Following up this series, I felt I should hasten in bringing forward the hadith:

"The two feet of the son of Aadam will not move from near his Lord on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about five (matters):- 1) about his life - how he spent it; 2) about his youth - how he took care of it; 3) about his wealth - how he earned it; 4) and where he spent it; 5) and about that which he acted upon from the knowledge that he acquired."

As an aid towards purification of the soul and preparation for death. The advice being firstly to myself, secondly to the du'aat (inviters to Allah's path) and thirdly to all my Muslim brothers and sisters in every part of the world - hoping that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala will cause benefit through that which I have written and allow the fruits of that to be reaped, both now and in the future. In this treatise I restricted myself to one part of the hadith and that is *"..and about that which he acted upon from the knowledge that he acquired"*.

The hadith that I chose is the key to goodness and the way towards paradise - by the permission of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. It is the cause of salvation and gain:

"The day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who brings to Allah a clean heart." (26:88-9)

Indeed it is quite possible that many people erred and strayed off the path due to ignorance or pretending to be ignorant of the correct order in prioritising knowledge, acting and calling to Allah. So this topic, by the will of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is in order to prevent myself and my brothers and sisters from ruin, misguidance and confusion.

I ask Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala to grant me the ability to act upon it, and to make it sincere and acceptable to Him, to eliminate darkness, illuminate the way and cause the ummah to benefit from it. He indeed is the All Hearer of invocation.

Verses of the Qur'an Regarding the Rewards of Actions

Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says in the Qur'an:

"Eat and drink with happiness because of what you used to." (52:19)

"And it will be cried out to them: This is the Paradise you have inherited for what you used to do!" (7:43)

"Thus Allah rewards the pious, those whose lives the Angels take while they are in a pious state saying: Peace be upon you, enter you Paradise because of that which you used to do." (16:32)

"(It will be said in the Hereafter): O you disbelievers! Make no excuses this Day! You are being requited only for what you used to do." (66:7)

"And whoever brings an evil deed they will be cast down on their faces in the Fire (and it will be said to them): Are you being recompensed for anything except for what you used to do?" (27:90)

"On the Day when the torment shall cover them from above them and from underneath their feet and it will be said: Taste what you used to do." (29:55)

"This day none will be wronged in anything nor will you be requited in anything except that which you used to do." (36:54)

Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala makes clear the destination of all created beings. Their different ascending and descending ranks will only be in accordance with their actions. Thus man will either be in a state of happiness or misery as a result of his righteous or evil deeds.

On the authority of Ibn Mas'ud radiallaahu 'anhu who said that the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"The two feet of the son of Adam will not move from near his Lord on the day of Judgement until he is asked about five (matters) about his life - how he spent it; about his youth - how he took care of it; about his wealth - how he earned it; and where he spent it and about that which he acted upon from the knowledge he acquired."* (at Tirmidhi, and others, see Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmidhi, no. 1969, and as Silsilah as Saheehah no.946).

So there is no escaping for the servant from being questioned about certain things: About his life - how he spent it; was it in righteousness and piety or in sin and transgression? About his youth - how he spent it, was it in acts of obedience or acts of sin? About his wealth - how he acquired it, was it from that which is halaal or from that which is haraam?

These things, very sadly, are seldom asked about, nor is any weight given to them. Rather, the greatest concern is to gather wealth, whether it is halaal, haraam or doubtful. Just as soon as a person looking for work hears of a position in a usurious bank, he hurries to take it, or of that in a cigarette factory, he strives to obtain it. He rushes without hesitation for any type of work which brings in money; and as for the legal verdicts allowing that, one could go on mentioning them!

I would like to take this opportunity to remind with this hadeeth, every person that took a wage for work that he did or for a post that he was commissioned to, that his feet won't move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his wealth and how he earned it.

You will see the most surprising things in official agencies and establishments around the world. Maybe you will see that tea, coffee and newspapers are the main aspects of work so that a worker will delay visitors without any consideration or concern. He dislikes the sight of them because they trouble his comfort and cause him disturbance. He searches for procedures that cause complexity and means of obstruction, so that he may say to a visitor: We're short of such and such a thing, come back tomorrow".

They announce that all dealings stop one hour or more before the end of their work time. Maybe some of them wake up late by two hours or more for work, because of which people get set back from their jobs. Perhaps some workers fail to execute transactions willingly, or they stall them in order to receive bribes. So we should all fear Allah as regards to our work and duties - starting work on time and leaving at the right time, dealing with people with politeness and ease, being patient upon hardships of work, seeking by that the reward from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Then, you are answerable, O servant of Allah, about the way you spent your wealth - in obedience or sinfulness and about the knowledge that you possess and how much of it you acted upon. So this being the case, it is essential that knowledge is converted into actions and (correct) conduct.

Maybe a question springs to mind here: Would the absence of seeking knowledge be a cause for salvation, as little knowledge requires little action? To this, I say:

* FIRSTLY: Verily Islam elevated the people of knowledge over others. The texts pertaining to this are numerous, among them are the Sayings of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala:

"Say, are they alike those who have knowledge and those who don't have knowledge?" (39:9)

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge" (58:11)

Also the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: *"Whoever treads a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him the path to Paradise."* (part of a sahih hadith reported by Ibn Majah and others, fulfilling the conditions of Imam al Bukhari and Imam Muslim)

* SECONDLY: Deliberately intending not to seek knowledge is haram and everyone is accountable for seeking knowledge according to his capacity and capability.

* THIRDLY: There are some Islamic fields of knowledge which the learning and teaching of are obligatory upon every individual and some which are obligatory upon certain individuals only, so this should be taken into consideration, and every person is accountable according to his ability.

* FOURTHLY: A person may fall into a violation of the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) whilst he is seeking knowledge, due to his lack of knowledge of a particular ruling, in this case it is hope that Allah would forgive him. As for deliberately intending to remain ignorant, this contradicts the saying of the Most High:

"So ask the people of knowledge if you know not" (16:43)

When a group of the Companions passed a ruling, without knowledge, to the wounded man that he should have a full bath - which eventually lead to his death, the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam supplicated against them saying: *"They killed him, may Allah kill them, should they not have asked if they didnt know?! Verily the cure of all ignorance is to question! It would have been enough for him had he performed tayammum."* [The author is pointing here to the hadith of Jabir radiallaahu 'anhu who said: "We set out for a journey and along the way a man from amongst us injured himself on a rock and split his head, after which he had a wet dream and required a bath so he asked his companions, "Do you find any concession for me in that I make tayammum? They replied, "We do not find any concession for you as you are able to use water." So he bathed and died as a result. This was mentioned to the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. He sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam then replied as is mentioned above. (Sunan Abu Dawud, vol. 1 p.59, hadith no.336)]

Removing the Hindrances

Due to the fact that there are things that are a hindrance to knowledge and actions, they must be studied in order to be removed; and one should begin by assiduously examining one's livelihood.

One should not forget one's goal in this worldly life, and that is to single out Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala in worship and uniqueness and fulfilling that which pleases Him for man was not created for any reason other than to worship Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala [Worship (al Ibaadah) is a comprehensive word, encompassing everything that Allah loves and is pleased with, whether it be of speech or of actions - inward or outward. An

example of speech is reciting the Qur'an, engaging in the remembrance of Allah, ordering good and forbidding evil and rectifying differences. Examples of internal actions are hope, fear, turning to Allah in repentance, love and reliance. Outward actions are such as prayer, zakah, pilgrimage, giving charity, joining ties of relationship and visiting one another. All of these things must be directed by the servant to Allah alone. In the book al 'Uboodiyah by Shaykh ul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (which will, insh'Allah be serialised on this list soon also) is elaborate detail of that.]. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala said:

"I did not create the jinns and men except they should worship Me (Alone)."
(51:56)

So it is befitting that the Muslim looks into his own and his family's necessities as regards to wealth, and work accordingly, [I say this not forgetting that the Muslim is rewarded for working and for the difficulties and hardships which he faces due to that - as long as his work in itself is not haram or doubtful - but he should use it as a means to fulfill a goal, which is the worship of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.], because spending hours working for the sake of acquiring extra wealth will only be at the cost of knowledge or actions or inviting to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala. So beware of this matter, then do as you please.

Also, it is not befitting, that a Muslim lolls out his tongue after extra work, while he is lacking knowledge in many aspects of his religion such as creed, fiqh, points regarding Islamic manners and other important pillars and compulsory actions. Yet it is astonishing to find such people justifying their actions to those that censure them, with the general texts encouraging righteous actions, saying: "Islam is a religion of action".

Yet I don't know what the consequence of this action is. Does it benefit by purifying and cleansing the soul? Or bring about some goodness for the Muslim Ummah? So, I say in replying to this:

Having sexual relations with one's wife, with the intention of keeping chaste and pure, is considered worship [The proof for this is in the hadith of Abu Dharr wherein the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"...and enjoining the good is charity, forbidding the evil is charity and in a man's sexual intercourse (with his wife) is charity."* They (the companions) asked, *"O Messenger of Allah! Is there reward for him who fulfills his sexual desires amongst us?"* He sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam replied, *"Tell me, if he were to fulfill that in something forbidden would he not bear the burden of that (in sin)? Similarly if he were to fulfill that in something permissible he would be rewarded."* (Sahih Muslim, Eng. trans. vol. 2, p. 482).], but this does not mean that a person remains persistent upon this matter, neglecting Friday prayers, praying in congregation and other obligatory duties (!)

Likewise, eating with the intention of keeping strength for the sake of fulfilling acts of obedience to Allah, is a form of worship, but does it mean that eating becomes a major aspect of our lives?

Similarly, striving to find a lawful job, seeking pure earnings and refraining from begging, is all worship, but does it mean that we constantly engage ourselves in this, so much so that it hinders us from congregational prayers, joining ties of relationship, learning about Islam and inviting to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala?

So look into this matter, may Allah have Mercy upon you, and if one job is enough for you, there is no need for a second; if one shift suffices your needs, don't take on another in overtime, and if you are able to cut the number of hours you work, don't hesitate [This is intended for the self employed and their likes, it is not meant by this that people should evade their duties at work, as this is Islamically impermissible.]. Furthermore if

you are from amongst those whom Allah has increased in provision and wealth, disengage yourself and whomsoever you are able to from your children and family, for the sake of worship, knowledge and inviting to Allah.

Let us remember together his saying sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, *"Verily Allah says: O son of Adam, free yourself for my worship, I will (in turn) fill your chest with satisfaction and remove your poverty, and if you don't I will fill your hands with distraction and will not remove your poverty."* (Ahmad, no. 8681, at Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah no.4107, Ibn Hibban and others). In another narration, *"I will fill your chest with distraction."* (Sahih Ibn Majah no. 3315)

The explanation of this in Fayd ul Qadeer [Fayd al Qadeer by al Manaawee is a scholarly piece of work explaining al-Jaami' as-Saghir by al-Haafidh as-Suyuti.] is: "Free yourself of your interests in order to worship Me and do not busy yourself in earning that which exceeds your needs and the needs of those under your care".

This is the way a person should be, busying himself in obedience to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala so that when he earns enough to fulfill his needs, the needs of those he is responsible for and whatever else is necessary, he does not busy himself in acquiring beyond that because in this way he will be establishing his worldly life but destroying his Hereafter.

Yet it is surprising to find people who have thousands and thousands of dollars or pounds, still running madly after the world and by so doing placing upon themselves difficulties and hardships, embarking upon business ventures, one after the other, which they could possibly do without.

What Now?

Maybe now one will strive to listen to more audio tapes on beneficial knowledge and attend talks and exhortations or read more beneficial books. Ponder upon the saying of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam *"..and what he acted upon from the knowledge he acquired."*, and know, that you are accountable in front of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for everything that you knew.

Check yourself before you try to seek increase through reading and listening to lectures and convert the knowledge that you already have into actions that accompany you as you live.

Knowledge reaches you of the impermissibility of usury, ask yourself, "Have I fulfilled acting upon this knowledge, and left off all dealings with interest?" You are required now to act by leaving off dealings with it, before anything else.

One reads the texts obligating the lowering of the gaze - so are you amongst those who lower their gaze from that which Allah the Glorified has made haram? If the answer is no then there is no need to inquire about lectures that they may deal with topics already materialised in you, for what you need most at this stage is to be lowering your gaze and studying all that would contribute towards implementing this matter, by reading, listening and generally learning.

Study these hindrances that you may remove yourself from them, and search in books and audio tapes in order to make this goal easy.

Some Texts Regarding the Removing of Hindrances

On the authority of Abu Bakr Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Qays from his *father who said that he heard his father say whilst he was facing the enemy: The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, "Verily the Gates of Paradise are under the shades of swords", so a man with a shabby appearance stood up and said: "O Abu Musa - did you hear the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam say this?" He said, "Yes", so he returned to his companions and said, "I send my (farewell) Salaam to you", then he broke the sheath of his sword, threw it away, went with his sword to the enemy and fought with it until he was killed.*" (Sahih Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.3, p.1053, hadith no. 4681)

One the authority of Jabir radiallaahu 'anhu who said, *A man said, O Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam where will I be if I am killed? He sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam replied, "In Paradise". So he threw away some dates he had in his hand and then went and fought until he was killed.* (Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.3, p.1052, no.4678).

A man with a shabby appearance stood up and said "O Abu Musa! Did you hear the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam say this?"

So the first thing that we must race towards doing is to remove all that is inauthentically attributed to the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam - so that we do not act upon anything except and until it has been authenticated and checked. Should we not be more enthusiastic than this man in this, for he was living in the best of all eras?

Then, after he removed this important barrier, he broke the sheath to his sword - not even thinking about returning.

Similarly, the great Companion who asked the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam about his place if he was killed (in fighting), as soon as he heard about Paradise, he threw away the dates that were in his hand only because he believed that these dates would delay him and hinder him from entering Paradise - and dates are from that which Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has made halal - so how about those things that hold us back and hinder us from which Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has made haram??

In the hadith of Anas radiallaahu 'anhu, Umayr ibn al Humam radiallaahu 'anhu said, *"If I were to live until I have eaten all of these dates of mine, it would be a long life". Anas said, "So he threw away whatever dates he had and then fought until he was killed"* (Sahih Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.3, p.1052-3, no.4680)

So hurry, O My Muslim brother, to the front line, cast away your desires and remove the love for wealth that has deprived you of the Pleasure of Allah, the Most High. Leave alone the haram things and the following of desires, the doubtful matters and the love for leadership, high position and the love of being noticed. Leave off injustices and oppression in all its different types and forms.

Then, do not forget - may Allah have mercy upon you - that you should hasten towards doing whatever you are able to of good and righteous actions. So do not delay and do not procrastinate and be careful of saying "soon, soon", as verily it is from the army of Iblees.

That virtuous man with the shabby appearance heard from Abu Musa radiallaahu 'anhu the saying of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam "Indeed the gates of Paradise are under the shades of swords. He did not postpone nor delay fighting in Allah's Path. He did not say: 'I'll fight after one or two years,' or 'after I finish this business project', or 'after I free myself of my preoccupations'".

As soon as that great Companion heard about Paradise as a reward from Allah for the one that died a martyr in the path of Allah, he threw away the dates that were in his hand without any delay or slightest hesitation.

Hasten, my Muslim brother, do not postpone and do not delay.

Then, ask yourself, O slave of Allah, why has this desire to procrastinate befallen me? Is this desire part of the deen? Is it something that pleases Allah the Most High? Or is it a satanic methodology of making smooth the way to escaping from carrying out Allah's orders or desisting from that which He has prohibited.

It is imperative that you take advantage of strong bursts of faith in order to precede with beneficial actions without any delay or postponement, while at the same time place in the back of your mind the saying of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, *"There is hesitation in everything except in the actions of the Hereafter."* (Abu Dawud, Engl. Trans. vol.3, p.1346, hadith 4792).

If you hear that somebody is calling to good actions, such as, contributing towards building a masjid or joining ties of relations, or to make peace between two disputing parties, or visiting a sick person, don't think twice about responding, and don't deliberate.

Know that the best time to act is the moment you hear the call. There is nothing to guarantee that you will live the moments after it. Whispers of Shaytan continue in increasing the will to procrastinate, causing the zeal to subside and the firm resolution to weaken. As a result, it becomes impossible for you to advance your level of faith, leaving no room for rectifying those deficiencies, sins and shortcomings.

Obligatory Actions Before the Supererogatory and Recommended Actions

Act upon those things which are obligatory, may Allah have mercy on you, before the acts that are supererogatory and recommended. Bear in mind that obligatory actions are of different levels of importance, so give preference to the most important of them first, and then to the next in importance. Only then move on to the supererogatory and recommended actions, giving precedence to that which is most important amongst them.

Who to Start With?

Everything that I have mentioned so far has been in relation to oneself before anybody else. So start with yourself before the members of your family and look at what is lacking in you in order that you may start treating it.

So if there is a common deficiency amongst you and one of your companions or family members then join him with you in resolving this problem because the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"Whoever from amongst you sees an evil he should change it with his hand and if he is not able to then with his tongue and if he is not able to, then (he should hate it) in his heart, and that is the weakest level of faith".* (Ahmad, vol.3, p.20, 49, and 92; Muslim Engl. trans. vol.1, p.33, no.79, and others).

Likewise before you think about spending time amongst your companions either for the sake of knowledge, action or inviting to Allah, contemplate and think:

- * How is your relationship with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala?
- * How is your humbleness in prayer?
- * Read about that which will better your condition and that of your prayer, increase your humbleness in it and soften your heart.

- * Are you one whose supplications are answered or do you notice most of your supplications not being answered?
- * Look into your aqeedah and the level of your certainty and reliance upon Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and observe closely your food and drink - are they from that which is halal or haram, or is there some doubt about their source?
- * If the situation was on that requires enjoining the good and forbidding evil, what would you do?

[This is in reference to the saying of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam *"By Him in Who's Hands is my soul, you will enjoin the good and prohibit the evil or (else) Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Him, then you will call upon Him and He will not answer you"*. (Ahmed in his Musnad, at-Tirmidhi)]

... all that to solve the reason why our supplications are not being answered.

Maybe you would benefit from reading hadiths pertaining to the punishment of the grave and that of its bliss, about the terror of the Resurrection, and the torment of the Hell Fire. You could well continue reading for days, weeks, or months, accompanying that with good actions and self struggle.

It is imperative that a person takes his soul to account and treats his deficiencies. Match yourself against the Qur'an and the Sunnah to know who you are, and look what you have set aside for Allah to know what Allah the Almighty and Majestic has prepared for you because of the saying of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam:

"WHOEVER WANTS TO KNOW WHAT ALLAH HAS PREPARED FOR HIM, THEN HE SHOULD LOOK TO WHAT HE HAS PREPARED FOR ALLAH." (Abu Nu'aym, in al-Hilyah and others. Silsilah as-Saheehah, no.2310)

- * Are you prepared for the meeting with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala?
- * Have you fulfilled the rights of the creation, one to another? Or are you in a constant state of postponing and deferring?
- * Have you converted your knowledge of repentance into crying and penitence?
- * Have you turned whatever you have read about the loving for Allah, into real love for your Muslim brothers?
- * Do you often visit them, and overlook their faults? Do you aid the needy amongst them, feel delight for their happiness and grieve for their sorrow?
- * Do you taste the sweetness and delight of Faith?

If the answer is in the negative then go back to the hadith of the Prophet saw:

"There are three attributes whoever is characterised by them will relish the sweetness of faith: he to whom Allah and His Messenger are more beloved than anyone else; he who loves a person solely for the sake of Allah; and he who has as great an abhorrence of entering into disbelief after Allah has rescued him from it, as he has of being thrown into the Fire." (Ahmad, Musnad, al Bukhari, Engl. trans. vol.1, p.20, no.15); Muslim (Book of Iman, vol.1, p.30, no.67) and others).

- * Is Allah and His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam more beloved to you than anybody else?
- * Do you give precedence to the love of Allah over wealth, business, whims and desires?
- * Test yourself when you hear the call to prayer, if you notice a desire to delay answering it in order to pursue your interests in trade (for example) then know that Shaytan has succeeded in gradually leading you astray and that your love for Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is deficient. In this way it is upon you to consolidate yourself,

giving precedence to that orders of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala over any other worldly matter.

Then contemplate the second matter, may Allah have mercy upon you, "He who loves a person solely for the sake of Allah". Look into the reality of your love for people: What is the basis of your love? What is the basis of your hating and detesting? Why do you love a particular person more than another? Is it because he is from your people? Or for his wealth and status, or for some worldly interests? Or is it because of his compliance to the orders of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and his undertaking of righteous actions?

Maybe you are still facing difficulty for not having relished the sweetness of Faith. So where does the problem lie? It could be that the third matter has not materialised, that is the saying of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam *"..and he who has as great an abhorrence of entering into disbelief after Allah has rescued him from it, as he has of being thrown into the Fire."*

*How is your abhorrence of entering into disbelief? Do you abhor it as you would abhor being thrown into the Hellfire?
* Do you live this abhorrence and this fear?
* It ought to be that you cultivate this feeling in you, so that your sincerity to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is cultivated and that you may hasten to purify your soul.
* Contemplate the hadith of Umm Salamah radiallaahu 'anhu who said: "Most of the invocations of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam used to be: *"O Changer of the Hearts make my heart firm upon your religion."* (Ahmad , Musnad, at-Tirmidhi and others).
* Reflect upon how Ibrahim 'alayhis salaam feared associating partners with Allah, so he used to supplicate:

"And keep my and my sons from worshipping idols." (14:35)

* Dont forget the supplication of Yusuf 'alayhis salaam

"Cause me to die as a Muslim and join me with the righteous." (12:101)

You should aid yourself through fear: living with the fear of eternal abode in the Hellfire and of never coming out of it, from everlasting hunger and continuous thirst, with fear of crying blood continually, so much so that if a ship was to be sent into it, it would float.

The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said *"Verily the inhabitants of the Fire cry, so much so that if ships were sailed into their tears, they would float, and verily they would cry blood - meaning instead of tears."* (al-Haakim, Ibn Maajah, Kitaab az-Zuhd, no. 4323, and others).

Dont rest and sit around while the sweetness of Faith is missing or is weakened. How many people set out on journeys for the purpose of treating their illnesses and how many of them spend out of their wealth to treat these illnesses? Do not the souls and the hearts have more priority in being treated, as their matter is one of total eternity?

Bring to mind the hadith -

"Every slave will be resurrected upon that which he died" (Muslim, and others from the hadith of Jabir radiallaahu 'anhu)

Then expect death at any moment. It is better for you if you were to meet death whilst trying to improve your own condition than to die whilst striving to improve others', being

held accountable at the same time for leaving off obligatory actions just like the lantern that burns itself out and gives light to others, as in the hadith,

"The example of the scholar who teaches the people good things but forgets himself is that of a lantern, it gives light to the people but burns itself out". (at-Tabarani, in al-Kabir, and ad-Diya'. See also Iqtid' ul 'Ilm il-'Amal no.70)

This is what Abu ad-Darda radiallaahu 'anhu used to fear hence his saying, "Verily what I fear from my Lord on the Day of Resurrection is that He calls me at the head of all creation and says to me: "O Uwaymir," so I say "Here I am, My Lord, at Your service," so He says, "What did you act upon from the knowledge that you acquired?"

Who Should I Give Priority to In Inviting First?

Begin with yourself before your family members and anyone else, as has already preceded. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala said:

"O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded." (66:6)

Then, attend to your wife, before your neighbour and your companions, so that she can help you in bring up the children. Before you give da'wah to your cousins, give da'wah to your brother's children yet give da'wah to your cousins before giving da'wah to your companions - and carry on in this manner.

Why is preference to be given to your own children before, for example, your brother's children? Once you are under the earth's surface (i.e. in your grave), your children, your brother's children and your beloved ones will all feel great sorrow for your absence. But as days go by, forgetfulness has to affect them, except your children, for they will be praying to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for you everyday, rather many times a day, rather, in many of their prostrations. You will still be receiving good deeds while you are in your grave - how?

The Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam made it clear for us, when he sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"When a person dies, all of his actions discontinue, except three: a recurring charity, or knowledge that is being benefitted from, or a righteous man that prays for him."* (Muslim, Kitab al-Wasiyyah, Engl. trans. vol.3, p.867, no. 4005; Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Wasaayaa, Eng trans. vol.2, p.812, no.2874; and others).

He sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, *"Verily the purest of what you eat is that which is of your own earning and indeed your children are from that which you have earned."* (al-Bukhari, at-Tareekh, at-Tirmidhi and others, Irwaa al-Ghaleel, no.1626).

Yet it is surprising to see some propogators of Islam, rather, many of them, unfortunately being very active with great strength in giving da'wah to the people, but their women and their children are in a condition that they themselves are not pleased with, so which of the people have more priority to be given attention, education and da'wah?

From A Man's Perfecting His Religion is Leaving Alone That Which Does Not Concern Him

It is imperative for us to build the levels of knowledge and action upon a firm, strong foundation, and that is the saying of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, *"From a man's perfecting his religion is his leaving alone that which does not concern him"*. (Ahmad in his Musnad, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and others, Sharh Aqeedah at-Tahawiyah, no.268)

In Fayd ul Qadeer, the author writes, "It is understood from this that from a man's deficiency in his religion is his indulging in that which does not concern him. This includes everything of secondary importance, whichever form it may take. What should concern him is all that relates to the essentials of his livelihood, that which fulfills his need for sustenance, clothing, keeping himself chaste thereby, and the like thereof from the necessities of life, excluding those things relating to his own personal pleasures. He should be concerned with all that relates to his salvation in the Hereafter, that being Islaam, imaan, and ihsaan. In this way he stays safe from ruin, all forms of evil and from argumentation. This is part of perfecting his religion, firm establishment of his piety and keeping away from following his desires. Whereas striving to accomplish other than this is loss of irreplaceable valuable time, in doing what he was not created for. So whoever worships his Lord, with realisation of his closeness to his Lord, and of his Lord's closeness to him, has perfected his religion, as has proceeded".

It is further stated in Fayd ul Qadeer, "Part of that which does not concern the worshipper is his learning fields of knowledge of lesser importance whilst leaving knowledge of greater importance, like the person who abandons knowledge which causes benefit to himself and engages himself in learning that which he could correct others with, like, for example, the knowledge of how to debate, excusing himself for that saying, "My intention is to benefit the people." Yet if he was truthful, he would have busied himself with correcting himself and his heart, by removing bad characteristics, like jealousy, showing off, pride, haughtiness towards others and other destructive attributes. They say, "debating is equivalent to a quarter of Islam and other say: half of it, and some say: all of it".

Islam consists of acting as well as abstaining. By relinquishing all that does not concern him and leaving that which is of no importance to him and that which doesn't benefit him, a person perfects his religion. The only way this abandonment is accomplished is by having a full realization that, "From a man's perfecting his religion is his busying himself with that which concerns him", and what is of concern and importance to him is based upon levels and grades of importance, in beliefs, faith in the unseen and in hurrying to do good deeds mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. By that he would have striven to act upon everything that he has been ordered with and would have abandoned everything prohibited. This is Islam and depending on how well these things are accomplished, determines the position of the worshipper with Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and Allah knows best.

If we understand these two important principles, we are able to derive many other principles from them, and we would come to know that there is no way of recognising what "concerns us and what doesn't concern us", except through knowledge, which necessitates properly understanding the principle: "The more important takes precedence over that which is less important". From here we would move on to acting upon the principle of "determining the most important." In this way knowledge, speech and studies are purified so that the unimportant, the prohibited and the corrupted are removed, so all that is left being the beneficial pure things like remembrance of Allah, sunnah, fiqh...

In the same way had actions, characteristics and mannerisms are sifted out so that every attribute denounced in the Book and the Sunnah is removed and what remain are the beneficial worthy actions like reciting the Book of Allah, studying together the Sunnah of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam enjoining the good, forbidding the evil...

This is the way the Muslim arranges and plans his affairs, portraying them in the form of everything good and beneficial whether it be intention, speech or action, avoiding everything detestable, hating that for himself as mentioned in the hadith, *"Verily Allah the Mighty and Majestic, is Generous, He loves generosity and noble character and hates the despicable character"*. [From as-Silsilah as-Sahihah, no.1378. al Manawee says in Fayd al Qadeer: "This noble character is the manners and attributes ordained in the Religion, not those deemed noble in wordly affairs, for the elevated in them are in actual fact despised."]

From amongst the unfortunate things one hears is some people using this hadith as a proof to oppose those who encourage engaging in recommended actions. The reason being is that they understand the "despicable" things to include the recommended actions or the "superficialities" - as they claim. What I previously mentioned disproves them on the one hand. On the other hand we request these people to explain to us how something could be made recommended or made part of the Sunnah and be detestable and hated to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala at the same time?! The wording of the hadith is "and He hates the despicable manners", so is it possible that what has been considered recommended be of those things hated?!

What is the Effect of Giving Advice and Admonition

On the authority of Hakeem ibn Hizaam radiallaahu 'anhu who said, *"I asked the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam (for charity), and he gave me. Again I asked and he gave me. Once again, I asked and he gave me, then he said, "O Hakeem! Verily this wealth is like a sweet fresh fruit, whoever takes it without greediness is blessed in it and whoever takes it with greediness is not blessed in it, just like the person that eats yet is never satisfied, and the upper hand is better than the lower hand". Hakeem added, "So I said, "O Messenger of Allah, by the One who sent you with the Truth I shall not accept anything from anybody after you until I leave this world". Later Abu Bakr radiallaahu 'anhu used to call Hakeem in order to give him his share of war booty but he would refuse. Also 'Umar would call him to give him his share but he would refuse to take anything from him. On that 'Umar said, "O Muslims! Verily I hold you as witnesses that I offered to Hakeem his share of the booty, but he refuses to take it". He never took anything from anybody after the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam until he died"*. (al Bukhari, Eng. trans. vol.2, p.320, hadith no.551).

Hakeem would ask from the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and he would give to him - this happened three times, upon which the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam then directed him to contentment, self-respect and to refrain from begging. What was Hakeem's radiallaahu 'anhu reaction to that? He vowed by Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala that he would never return to such a thing, and that he wouldn't take anything from anyone until he parted from the world.

He did not just listen to the exhortation, shake his head crying, having been affected by it and return the next day to what he was doing before, as if nothing had ever taken place. Instead he kept to his promise, during the lifetime of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and of Abu Bakr, who would call him in order to receive his due but he would refuse. In this manner he continued, until the Caliphate of 'Umar radiallaahu 'anhu who used to present to him his rightful share of the war booty, that which Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala had specified for him from above the seven heavens, but he would refuse, having been affected by the admonition of the Messenger of Allah sallallaahu

'alayhi wa sallam. He remained in this condition until he passed away sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

The effect of this advice stayed with him until the final moments of his life. This is how we should act and should be, carrying into effect what we hear so that our condition and the condition of our ummah may change. Yet how sorrowful our condition is, as we have had an abundance of books, lectures, sermons and admonitions yet it is as if they are only for the purpose of learning culture and acquiring information, not to act upon or carry into effect. To Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is our complaint.

How beautiful and sweet this wealth is! But the love of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is more beautiful and the love of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is sweeter and more cherished. What was the price Hakeem paid for this love? It cost him a great amount. He has outlined for our Ummah lessons in patience, power of determination, firm will and acting upon knowledge.

Contemplating the Texts is the First Action

On the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (ra) who said, "The Prophet (saw) said to me, "Recite (the Qur'an) to me". I said, "O Messenger of Allah shall I recite to you while to you it was revealed?". He (saw) said, "Yes". So I recited Surah an-Nisa' until I came to this verse:

"How (will it be) then, when we bring from each nation a witness and we bring you (O Muhammad saw) as a witness against these people". (4:41)

He (saw) said, "Enough for now". I then turned to him (saw) and his eyes were shedding tears". (al Bukhari, Engl. trans. vol.6, p. 515, no. 570; and Muslim).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) used to listen to Allah's verses being recited to him, no sooner a verse reached him depicting him being brought as a witness upon his Ummah, he said: "Enough for now", and started crying out of fear and awe of Allah (swt). This was how the Messenger (saw) would ponder and contemplated over the verses, and as a result, break into tears.

Contemplating and reflecting upon Allah's verse without a doubt, directs towards invocation and actions, so this should be our condition concerning them and concerning the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Hudayfah (ra) narrates, *"I prayed with the Prophet (saw) one night and he started reciting Surah al Baqarah and I thought he might bow at the end of one hundred verses but he proceeded on. I then thought he might read all of it. Then he started Surah al 'Imran and completed it, reciting leisurely. Whenever he recited the verses which referred to the Glory of Allah, he glorified (saying subhanallah) and when he recited verses which shows how Allah is to be begged, he would beg from Him. When he recited verses dealing with protection of the Lord, he sought His protection. He would then bow and say "Glory be to my Lord the All Mighty (Subhana Rabbi al 'Adheem); this bowing lasted about the same length as his standing, then he would (upon raising his head), "Allah listened to he who praised Him", then he would stand for a period almost as long as he had bowed. He would then prostrate and say: "Glory be to my Lord the Most High (Subhana Rabbi al 'Ala) his prostration lasting for almost as long as his standing". (Muslim, Engl. trans., vol.1, p.374, no.1697)*

'Auf ibn Malik said, *"I stayed with the Messenger of Allah (saw) one night during which he stood in prayer and recited Surah al Baqarah. He would stop at every verse that mentioned Allah's Mercy., begging Him for it, and at every Verse that mentioned His*

punishment, seeking refuge in Allah from it. He would then bow for a period similar to that of his standing, supplicating: "How Perfect is He Who has all Power, Kingdom, Magnificence and Supremacy", as he would in his prostration". (Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, and Sahih al-Kalim at-Tayyib, no.75)

The Messenger (saw) would recite the Qur'an in his prayer contemplating its verses, whenever he passed by a verse mentioning Allah's Mercy, he paused, asking of Allah, the Most High, and whenever he passed by a verse mentioning His punishment he paused seeking refuge from it. Whenever he (saw) passed by a verse referring to the Glory of Allah, he glorified Him.

In this way contemplating Allah's Verses brings about actions of the heart like fear, hope, and thereupon, invocation - the most noble form of worship. All this, accordingly, must affect the character and manners of a person and his dealings with people.

Invocation: The Fruit of Action

Allah swt said,

"Say: My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him". (25:77)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **"Invocation is Worship"**. (Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi who said "this hadith is hasan-sahih".) He (saw) said **"The best form of worship is invocation"**. (al-Haakim and others). He (saw) further said, **"No (form of) worship is better in the sight of Allah than invocation"**. (Ahmad in his Musnad, no. 8733, al-Bukhari, Adab al-Mufrad, chapter 296 and others, Sahih at-Tirmidhi, no. 2684).

Whoever ponders carefully upon these texts would find invocation a cause of attaining the Love and Pleasure of Allah swt, and that without it Allah (swt) would have paid no attention to us. The Prophet (saw) also made clear that invocation is the noblest and best form of Worship.

So what caused it to reach this lofty station? Invocation is the act of turning to Allah the Glorified, with one's heart and with one's tongue, seeking to be forgiven in this world and in the Hereafter, hoping to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt), entering Paradise and being saved from the Fire.

So many verses of persuasion, reference to Gardens of Bliss and Eternity were recited for the people to hear but what benefit did Abu Jahl (1) derive from that? Verses of dissuasion, mentioning Punishment and giving warnings meet the ears, but while the likes of Abu Lahab (2) turn away from them, how could they expect salvation?

So the fruits manifest themselves when verses pertaining to the Fire are recited and the worshipper takes to seeking refuge from it, when verses pertaining to Paradise are recited and he begs Allah to be of its inhabitants.

However, the servant is not granted the ability to supplicate, neither is he granted acceptance unless he is sincere and true in his supplication, as the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **"..and know that Allah doesn't accept the invocation of an averted, inattentive heart"**. (at-Tirmidhi, and others).

When 'Aishah (ra) asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) about Ibn Ju'daan (3) saying, "O Messenger of Allah, in the days of Jahiliyah, Ibn Ju'daan would join ties of relationship and feed the poor, so will that benefit him any?". He (saw) said, **"No, O 'Aishah! He**

never once said: O My Lord, Forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgement. (Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.1, p.139, no. 416). So Ibn Jud'aan not turning to Allah swt in supplication caused him eternal abode in the Fire. Never did he say: "O My Lord, forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgement".

This helps us understand the saying of the Most High:

"And your Lord said: Invoke Me and I will answer your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation". (40:60)

For just as invocation is considered worship, similarly, its neglect is considered disbelief and pride.

As for the affair of the Prophets, the Messenger and the righteous with respect to invocation, it is immeasurable. They race to it hurriedly with full enthusiasm, in it is their nourishment, their medicament and their life.

At this stage, I would like to pose a question. It is a test, seeking to know our true condition. What is our course of action after having recited and listened to the following verses from Surah al 'Imran?

"(Remember) when the wife of 'Imran said, "O My Lord! I have vowed to You what is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services, so accept this, from me. Verily You are the All Hearer, the All Knower." Then when she delivered her (child) she said: "O My Lord! I have delivered a female child" - and Allah knew better what she delivered, "and the male is not like the female and I have named her Maryam, and I seek refuge with You for her and for her offspring from shaytaan the outcast." So her Lord accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner, and put her under the care of Zakariyah. Every time he entered her chamber to (visit) her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Maryam! From where have you got this?" She said, "This is from Allah! Verily Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit." At that time Zakariyah invoked his Lord saying, "O my Lord! Grant me from You a good offspring You are indeed the All Hearer of Invocation". Then the angels called him while he was standing in his chamber (saying): "Allah gives you glad tidings of Yahya, confirming the word from Allah, noble, chaste, a Prophet from amongst the righteous." He said, "O my Lord! How can I have a son when I am very old, and my wife is barren?". Allah said: "Thus Allah does what He wills". (3:35-40)

Indeed when Zakariyah's (as) monetary means had been cut off and he saw the provision Allah (swt) had granted to Maryam, this incited him to supplicate to his Lord (swt).

"At that time Zakariyah invoked his Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant me from You, a good offspring. You are indeed the All Hearer of invocation". (3:38)

The saying of Allah (swt) "hunalika" ("at that time") points to the time and place Zakariyah took advantage of in order to invoke and beseech Allah (swt) and his immediateness in that, once he saw the opportunity. He who gave Maryam provision is fully capable of granting righteous offspring and that is what occurred.

"Then the angels called him while he was standing in his chamber (saying): "Allah gives you glad tidings of Yahya confirming the word from Allah, noble, chaste, a Prophet from amongst the righteous". (3:39)

What is your condition, O Muslim, as you experience the omnipotence of Allah (swt) and witness his miracles taking place. It is essential that you turn to Allah (swt) in invocation. The Lord of Maryam, He Who provided for her when there was no other way of provision. The Lord of Zakariyah, He Who granted him a son when there was no way of having one - as is understood from the texts. So turn to Him in humbleness, imploring Him to relieve you of distress and to remove your anxieties and sorrows no matter how great or critical they may be.

(1) Abu Jahl, one of the leaders of Quraysh, was one of the most strident enemies of Islam.

(2) Abu Lahab and his wife were hostile enemies of Islam and about them was revealed Surah Lahab.

(3) Ibn Jud'aan, as an-Nawawi mentions in Sharh Sahih Muslim, was a relative of 'Aishah from the descendants of Tameem ibn Murrah. His name was 'Abdullah and was one of the leaders of Quraysh, well known for his generosity in feeding the people. Kitaab al-Iman hadith, no. 365.

The Prophet (saw) Seeking Refuge From Knowledge That Does Not Benefit

On the authority of Zayd ibn Arqam (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to say, **"O Allah, I seek refuge in you from knowledge which does not benefit, from a heart which does not feel humble, from a soul that does not feel contented and from an invocation that is not answered."** (Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.4, p.1425, no.6568; and others). Indeed the Prophet's (saw) seeking refuge from knowledge which doesn't benefit comprises many things:

So look, for example at the books of philosophy and those things of the Ahl ul Kalaam, They have become prevalent and widespread even so far as being included into the syllabuses of institutions and universities. A student may waste most of his time trying to comprehend what an author intended, and once understood he feels no real gain from that, neither towards his religion, nor his life, nor towards his community or the Muslim Ummah.

A student spends years mastering various subjects, not having any affinity to the reality of life, nor bringing him any nearer to Allah swt.

How many biographies of unimportant, notorious characters are found, examinations are set about them and certificates are awarded because of them. Their status is raised on an international level. This is on the one hand, while on the other hand we remain ignorant of the biographies of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw). We are ignorant of the tafseer of even the shortest Chapters of Qur'an, ignorant of basic rulings of fiqh that everyone is required to know, and maybe people will treat greatly if I said: We are ignorant of many fundamentals of our 'aqeedah.

The Punishment for Not Acting Upon One's Knowledge

On the authority of Usamah ibn Zayd (ra) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) sitting, **"A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown into the Fire. His intestines will be hanging out, spilling onto the ground, and he will go around like a donkey goes around a millstone. The inhabitants of the Fire will gather around him and say: "O so and so! What is your affair? Didn't you used to order us to do good deeds and forbid us from doing bad deeds?" He will reply, "Yes I used to order you to do good deeds, but I did not do them myself, and I used to forbid you from doing bad deeds, yet I used to do them myself".** (al Bukhari, Engl. trans. vol.4, p.315, no. 489; Muslim and others).

The Messenger (saw) also said in a hadith, **"During the night of my ascension, I passed by a group of people. Their lips were being severed with scissors of fire.**

I said, "O Jibreel (as)! Who are these people?" He said, "They are the preachers from your Ummah that would say other than what they would do". (Ahmad in his Musnad, 3/120, 231, and 239; Ibn Hibban and others, Sahih at-Targheeb, no.120).

On the authority of 'Umar ibn al Khattab (ra) who said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ***"Islam will dominate so that traders frequent the seas and horses enter into the path of Allah. Then there will appear a people who will recite the Qur'an saying, "Who amongst us had memorised the most Qur'an? Who is the most knowledgeable of us? Which of us has the most understanding?"*** Then he (saw) asked his companions, "Is there any good in them?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger (saw) know best". He(saw) said, ***"They are from you and from this ummah and they are from the fuel of the fire"***. (at-Tabarani, in al-Awsat and al-Bazzar, Sahih at-Targheeb wa at-Tarheeb, no.131).

Also in the hadith, ***"The Qur'an is either a proof for you or against you"***. (Muslim, Engl. trans. vol.1, p.148, no.432; and others).

Trials Take Place When Knowledge Is Sought for Other Than Actions

On the authority of 'Ali (ra) that he made mention of trials occurring at the end of time. 'Umar (ra) asked him, "When will that be, O 'Ali?" He said, ***"When understanding of the religion is sought for other purposes, and knowledge is acquired for other than acting upon, and wordly gain is sought with the actions of the Hereafter"***.

('Abdar Razzaq in his Mussanaf as a statement of 'Ali. It is also in Sahih at-Targhib at-Tarhib, no.106)

The Indications of Beneficial Knowledge

Everything has its indications and signs. Indications that knowledge is beneficial are that it leads to fine character, good manners and praiseworthy attributes. In this regard it was said: "He whose knowledge doesn't cause him to weep, can be justifiably considered not to have been granted beneficial knowledge, since Allah (swt) described the people of knowledge saying:

"Say: Believe in it (the Qur'an) or do not believe. Verily! Those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration. And they say: "Glory be to our Lord! Truly, the promise of our Lord must be fulfilled". And they fall down on their faces weeping and it adds to their humility." (17:107-9)

Thus knowledge carries its possessor towards humility, prostration, crying, calling oneself to account and truthfulness with Allah swt.

Indeed crying is the clearest sign and best proof of the knowledge one possesses and of a person's truthfulness. What is the benefit of knowledge a person learns, if it doesn't lead him to crying, humbleness, penitence and good dealings with the people?

Is not the possessor of knowledge one who knows most about his Lord swt? Has he not read about His Exalted, Perfect, Lofty Attributes that which causes his heart to humble and his eyes to shed tears?? Has he not read in the Book of Allah and in the sayings of the Messenger of Allah saw, texts pertaining to the Fire, the terror in the grave and the fearful accounts of the Resurrection because of which mountains are humbled out of the fear of Allah (swt)?

So compare your position to this - may Allah have mercy upon us - and don't forget that virtuous saying, "He who's knowledge doesn't cause him to weep, can be justifiably considered not to have been granted beneficial knowledge".

A Call to Scholars and Students of Knowledge

I remind myself, and also advise you to have taqwa of Allah (swt). Before we commence with good actions, let us together answer a few important questions.

Are you from amongst those who are working in the field of hadith and its science?

Beware of busying yourself with the means at the expense of the goals. Do not spend your life gathering together all the different supporting chains of narrations and in doing so become oblivious of the intent behind it. In this regard, I would like to relate to you this short story, hoping that a lesson may be taken from it

On the authority of Hamzah al Kanaanee who say, "I gathered (1) a hadith of the Prophet (saw) from about two hundred different chains of narrations, which caused me great pleasure and satisfaction. I then saw Yahya ibn Ma'een (2) in a dream so I said, "O Abu Zakariyah, I gathered one hadith from two hundred different chains of narrations." So he remained silent for a while and then said, "I fear that this might fall under (the saying of Allah):

"The mutual rivalry for piling up of wordly things diverts you". (102:1)

(Siyar A'laam an-Nubalaa - adh-Dhahabi, vol.16, p.108)

Do not neglect acting in accordance with these texts, for you were not created so that it may be said, "you gathered this knowledge, checked that book, authored this and did that..."

You may busy yourself gathering a particular hadith, studying its chain of narrators and its text, moving from one book to another, trying to get to the correct position. Slow down, may Allah have mercy upon you, and ask: What would this hadith teach me, if it were authentic? What is its meaning and what is it directing to? Is it directing towards a superogatory action, already proven by many other authentic texts - you being amongst those who regard it as authentic?

Before you gather this hadith, turn to the already gathered, authenticated hadiths that direct you towards obligatory actions you haven't yet acted upon. Be eager to spend your time doing that which has been made obligatory upon you before anything else.

Ask yourself before you check a book or gather the ahadith in it: "Has anybody preceded me in this? Is he better than me, or as good as me at this?" If so, don't undertake this work, as you will be held to account for wasting time and following your desires.

Are you from those that teach the rulings of Qur'aanic recital?

Do not spend your time teaching these rulings while forgetting for what purpose the Qur'an was revealed! Beware of neglecting acting upon the contents of these verses that you read. Here you are teaching your student how to correctly recite Surah al Falaq. In teaching the verse:

"And from the evil of the envier when he envies" (113:5)

your only concern should not be to teach the correct pronunciation of the verse. Rather you must also consider the content of the verse, that the envious person is of the companions of evil, of those that anger Allah swt and please the shaytaan, so you seek refuge in Allah from this evil. Then you should cry because of the envy you may have of your Muslim brothers and make full effort to purify yourself of this illness with all that you have been granted of strength.

Further, it is shameful that there should be any enmity between you and your peers, those who have specialised to teach this noble knowledge.

Are not the verses that you study and recite enough to bring together even the best of people? Not to mention other than them? So why the enmity? Or is it just striving after fame and leadership?

O people of the Qur'an, who will come together in harmony if you people do not? Who will devote faithfully to Allah, if you fail to do so? The ignorant and ordinary folk? The open transgressors and sinners?

Worthy it is that you bring the hearts together by the permission of Allah - and not that your hearts remain diverse, for there is in the Qur'an that which unites the hearts, purifies the souls and guides to all righteousness.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the saying of the Messenger (saw), **"The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it"**. (Ahmad in Musnad, al Bukhari, Eng. trans. vol.6, p. 501, hadith no. 545). So be from amongst the best in knowledge, actions and manners. May Allah swt grant us success in doing all good.

As for the students of knowledge, do not let the gaining of a certificate turn your attention from the correct study, beneficial knowledge and righteous actions. Do not let achieving good grades and passing the academic year be the height of your concerns. Place the fear of Allah in your hearts and enver ever forget the goal of the concious Muslim, the objective of the repenting worshipper and true believer.

(1) The reference here is to the science of takhreej ul hadith.

(2) Imam an-Nasa'i said about Yahya ibn Ma'een, "Abu Zakariya, the reliable the trustworthy, one of the Imams of hadith.." Yahya ibn Ma'een said, "I wrote with my own hands, one million hadith". Ali ibn Madini said, "We do not know of anyone, since the time of Aadam, that wrote hadith the like of what Yahya ibn Ma'een wrote." He also said, "The knowledge of all the people ended at Yahya ibn Ma'een." Imam Ahmad said, "Yahya ibn Ma'een is the most knowledgeable of us regarding narrators of hadith". He died in the year 233H may Allah have meryc upon him. Taken from Tadhkirat al Huffadh, by Imam adh-Dhahabi, vol.3, p.429-430.

A Call to the Du'aat and the Imaams of the Masajid

O inviters to Allah's path, strive towards beneficial knowledge and righteous actions and do not forget to set good examples with fine character for actions speak louder than words.

The people most likely to be affected by you, are your parents, the people of your household and your children. (1) Is this influence found in you or not? Look at your behaviour and your character, and compare it to the behaviour of the true, sincere teacher, acting upon his knowledge. Until when, my respected brother, will you continue energetically giving da'wah to the people, yet forgetting your family and children? Until

when, may Allah have mercy upon you, will you pursue giving da'wah, going here and there, then return back late at night, only to sleep. A person in your situation should not neglect the saying of Allah swt:

"O you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern and severe, who disobey not, from executing the commands they receive from Allah but do that which they are commanded". (66:6)

Do not undertake giving lectures and lessons without thorough preparation, as your role is one of great importance, so don't take it lightly. Is it not sad to see that a da'ee (ie inviter to Allah's path, one who gives da'wah) goes to his lecture not knowing what he will say?

Do not hasten to give fatawa without verification, for passing rulings without knowledge is a great sin and its punishment is severe.

Do not relate a hadith unless you know that the people of knowledge have ruled in favour of its authenticity.

As for you, O Imams of Masajid, everybody's eyes are on you, so act in accordance with the responsibility you have been given, in knowledge, action and da'wah having patience upon any harm the people may cause you. Certainly, a cause for grief is that an Imam recites the Book of Allah swt, not being proficient in the rules of Qur'anic recital. It is sad indeed that an Imam who has been designated solely to lead the Prayers, having no other occupation but this, fails to master his work!

How do you spend your spare time that Allah swt will soon ask you about?

How can you be pleased with praying in a manner other than that of the Messenger of Allah (saw). So for example, you prostrate, leaving the space of two hand spans between your feet. Is it not to your advantage, may Allah have mercy upon you, that you take some moments out of the hours that you trifle away and learn that the Prophet (saw) used to "join his heels together" (at-Tahawi, Ibn Khuzaymah, Hakim declared it authentic and adh-Dhahabi agreed) in prostration?

Is it not an obligation upon you to spend some of your time in knowledge in order that you may answer the people's questions? Enough of answering questions with general texts, to conceal your ignorance of the proofs and your lack of understanding of most issues, may Allah guide us all.

It suffices you to say "the religion is ease", and under this banner you pass rulings which are just not permissible.

(1) Maybe some of them are not affected by you because of being taken over by desires, or because of heedlessness on their part, but what I am alluding to here is that the manners of the inviter to Allah's path should not be a cause in averting his loved one's and his relatives, as far as he is able to prevent that.

A Call to Authors and Book Publishers

As for you, O authors and writers! Your main concern should not be authoring books and writing, less this be a proof against you in front of Allah swt. Write about those topics you feel will benefit your own selves as well as your Muslim brothers, and your Ummah, taking heed not to turn knowledge into a business through which you seek this wordly life.

Maybe you write, explain or check works related to the topic of jealousy, or righteousness to parents, the love of Allah, or taqwa. Your role is indeed a great one, but you are the first person that should take benefit from these texts. So ask yourself: "Have I purified myself from jealousy?" Who is it that you envy and why? Do not have a good opinion about your own self. That self which urges you towards evil. Reproach yourself so that you may be saved and hurry to seek treatment for yourself with repentance to Allah swt, before you complete your composition. This should be your affair with every piece of writing and explanation, every checking and every book that you work on.

Is it not disgraceful that an author spends months on a book, knowing that somebody else has already written its like, or similar to it, or has done a much better job than him. Where is the fear of Allah with regard to this time spent, that Allah swt will soon ask him about on the Day of Resurrection?

Do you find it acceptable, may Allah have mercy upon you, that you spend years preparing a thesis in order to gain a major certificate, researching a "particle" of the Arabic language?

Or do you deem it proper that you expend years writing about a particular personality, knowledge of whom is no benefit to the Muslims.

How can you be pleased with yourself, that you waste several years in writing about issues which do not lead to righteous actions nor to the abandonment of evil actions?

How do you permit yourself to quote from somebody, without ascribing that to whome you quoted from, or mentioning the book that you took from?

* Is it that you pretend to possess what you do not have? How is it that you, while being one who puts himself forward to teach the people, neglect the saying of the Messenger (saw), **"The one who pretends that he has been given what he has not, is like the one who wears two garments of falsehood"**. (al Bukhari, Eng. trans. vol.7 no.146; Muslim, Eng. trans. vol.3, p.1167, no.5313; and others).

* Or is it out of jealousy on your part that you hide that which should not be hidden? Did not your writings, lectures and admonitions lead you to remove and mitigate this jealousy? Whereas the Messenger of Allah swt says in this regard, **"Two things can never unite in the heart of any true worshipper: faith and jealousy"**. (part of a hadith reported by Ahmad in his Musnad, and an-Nasa'i. Sahih an-Nasa'i, no.2912, reported by Abu Hurayrah ra). * Or do you see it as a love for prominence, reputation and showing off? Was the saying of the scholars hidden from you: "The blessing of knowledge is in ascribing it to he who mentioned it"? So as a result of this, the blessing was removed and destruction justified.

As for you O book publishers! Fear Allah your Lord, the Most High. It is not befitting that one among you should print and distribute many books, not knowing whether or not they are beneficial and worthy, except through hearsay, or due to their high demand.

Indeed your very self, my brother publisher, has more priority in being benefitted by this good. So give your attention to reading a beneficial book, contemplating its meaning and hurry towards acting upon it. This is worthier than busying yourself printing a second, third.. ninth book, for "that which is little yet suffices is better than that which is abundant but causes distraction". (part of a hadith mentioned in full in chapter 19).

Beware from having that which your printed come as a proof against you on the Day of Resurrection because of what it contains, of orders you have not fulfilled, and prohibitions you have not abstained from.

Also, take heed from printing that which is of no benefit and from distributing that which contains misguidance. Do not let the Shaytan play around with you through his rulings, making halal for you that which Allah sanctioned as haram, out of love for wealth and seeking its gain.

Stay well away from books which have been stolen, whether it be from the authors or from other publishing houses, as the blessing is removed by such a practice. Moreover, transgressing the rights of creation is a dangerous path to tread, and its repercussions are severe.

Examine yourselves: Are you gaining closeness to Allah swt while continuing in printing and distributing? Or do you feel preoccupied, heedless of Allah swt?

Try to strike a balance as much as is possible, between purifying yourselves and increasing in spreading knowledge.

Yet as I have already said, and I will continue saying, "Don't forget yourselves, before everything else".

A Call to Businessmen

As for you, O businessmen! Fear Allah swt with regard to yourselves, and do not sell your Hereafter in return for your wordly life. Have you paid off those debts, the owners of which are urging you to repay, before venturing into another business deal? before expanding into new projects, have you fulfilled all the rights in connection of previous ones?

Do you not know that you are gathering sins for the sake of something superficial and temporary? What will your wealth do for you on

"The day when neither wealth nor sons will avail Except for him who brings to Allah a clean heart" (26:88-9)

How strange it is to see someone who has enough wealth to suffice himself, his family and his offspring, probably for thousands of years if they were to live that long, spending his time greedily running after shortlived vanities and by that missing most congregational prayers and many obligations.

Remember, whilst you act in this manner the saying of the Messenger (saw)

"Never does the sun rise without two angels having been sent at either side of it, calling out, causing all the inhabitants of the earth to hear except human beings and jinns, "O People! Draw near to your Lord (by spending in charity) for that which is little yet suffices is better than that which is abundant but causes distraction". Never does the sun set without two angels having been sent at either side of it calling out, causing all the inhabitants of the earth to hear except human beings and jinns, "O Allah! grant succession (of wealth) to he who spends (in charity) and grant ruin to he who holds back his wealth" (Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan)

Words of Wisdom from the Book Iqtidaa' ul-'Ilm il-'Amal

* "Knowledge is like a father and action is like a child. Knowledge goes with action as narrating goes with understanding."

* "Do not feel satisfied with action, while being desolate of knowledge and do not feel satisfied with knowledge, whilst being heedless of actions. Rather, combine the two, even if your share of either may be meagre. A little of this, with a little of that is safer in the outcome, If Allah bestows His Mercy, and completes His favour upon His slave..."

* "Knowledge leads to action, just as action leads to salvation. So if the action is less than the knowledge, the scholar's knowledge is a burden upon him". (3)

* "Just as wealth has no benefit unless it is spent, knowledge does not benefit except one who acts upon it and observes its obligations".

* Knowledge is one of the pleasures of the world, yet if it is acted upon, it becomes for the Hereafter".

* "There are two tyrannies in the world: the tyranny of knowledge and the tyranny of wealth. What saves you from the tyranny of knowledge is worship, and what saves you from tyranny of wealth is renouncing it".

* "Whenever you intend to be honoured with knowledge, be attributed to it, and be of its people, before giving knowledge its full rights upon you, otherwise its light will be concealed from you and all that will remain on you is its outward illumination. That knowledge is against you, not for you because knowledge directs towards its application, so if it is not applied appropriately, its blessings are removed."

* "The best knowledge is that which benefits, and Allah only causes knowledge to benefit a person when he acts upon it once having learnt it and he does not cause it to benefit the person that leaves it after having learnt it".

* Knowledge without action is like a tree without fruit".

* "You are now in the preliminary world, in front of you are two places of abode, out of which you must live in one of. You have not been given assurance of protection, causing you to feel safe. Nor have you been granted acquittal, causing you to slacken".

* "If I were to know with full certainty that all of my life was but an hour, Why should I not renounce it and dedicate it to righteousness and obedience".

* "You are submerged in careless hope, the time of death you do not know of. Do not be fooled by good health. for it is from the most painful of illnesses Every soul is by its day. In the morning all hope will be removed. So act with good deeds and work hard Before you are prevented from acting"

* Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said, "Learn, learn, and once you have learnt, act". (hasan isnad , no.13)

* Abu Hurayrah (ra) said, "The example of knowledge not acted upon is that of a treasure none of which is spent in the way of Allah the Mighty and Majestic".

* az-Zuhri said, "The people will never be pleased with the statement of a scholar who does not act, nor of a person who acts but has no knowledge". (hasan isnad, no.12)

* "Whoever sought knowledge, intending the knowledge alone (ie without action), would not benefit by it. Yet whoever sought knowledge intending to act upon it, would benefit, even by a little knowledge".

* "Knowledge rests upon action, action rests upon sincerity, and sincerity to Allah brings about understanding of Allah the Mighty and Majestic".

* "Whoever seeks knowledge in order to act upon it will be humbled by his knowledge but whoever seeks it for other than that, will be increased by it in arrogance".

* "The time will soon come, if you live long, that knowledge will become a source of beautification, just as a person beautifies himself with a garment".

* "If Allah grants you knowledge, in return worship Him and do not make your goal merely narrating to the people".

* "The scholar remains ignorant with regard to what he has learnt until he acts according to it, and only then does he become a true scholar".

* "The knowledge of the hypocrite is in his speech, yet the knowledge of the believer is in his actions".

* "Act upon your knowledge, O man, and you will profit, for knowledge does not benefit unless one is proficient in action. Knowledge is a beauty, the taqwa of Allah being its ornatation, and the pious are busy with the knowledge they possess/ Learn, and then act, as much as you are able to, and do not let amusement nor arguing distract you. Teach the people and always intend to benefit them, and beware! Beware of weariness befalling you."

* "Whoever speaks good things yet acts unrighteously, Allah does not accept his good speech. Whereas he who speaks good things and works righteous acts, his speech is raised by his good deeds. That is because Allah swt says:

"To Him ascend the goodly word, and the righteous action raises it". (35:10)

* "Knowledge is the tool of action. So if a person spends his whole life gaining knowledge, when will he act?!"

* "Regardless of what knowledge passes you, do not let acting upon what you already know pass you".

* "Whoever does not look into Allah's right upon him with regards to his knowledge, that knowledge is a proof against you and its result is evil".

* "If knowledge is not acted upon it becomes a proof against you and you are not granted an excuse for the knowledge you possess, So if you have realised this fact, also realise, That the proof of a man's speech is in his actions."

* One scholar said, "O how I wish I could gain salvation from my knowledge, it neither being for me nor against me".

* "If knowledge does not benefit you, it will harm you"

* "There is no good in seeking to gain more knowledge, without having acted upon what you have already learnt, for the example of this person is that of one who gathers

firewood and then ties them ready to carry. Yet once finding himself unable to do so, adds another to the bundle".

* "For how long will I continue seeking knowledge, affectionately gathering with every eagerness, seeking to learn every type of it and every field yet not acting upon a thing of it. If the seeker of knowledge does not act upon what he knows, he is a wretched servant. Indeed knowledge is only of benefit for he who acts upon it and is pious".

* "I certainly regard that a person forgets what he used to know because of a sin he commits".

* "Indeed if the scholar does not act, his admonitions fail to affect the hearts, just like the rain slides off a smooth rock".

* "The example of an evil scholar is that of a large rock which blocks a canal. Neither does it drink from the water, nor does it allow the water to pass, giving life to the trees. So if only the evil scholars advised the servants of Allah saying, "O worshippers of Allah! Listen to what we tell you of your Prophet (saw), and your righteous predecessors, and act upon that. Do not look at these poor actions of ours, as we are a people in trial". They would have, by this, advised the people correctly. Yet they want to call the people towards their bad actions, causing them to act similarly."

* "A corrupt reciter (of the Qur'an) is more feared by me than a corrupt man who is open with his corruption, as the latter is the less deceiving of the two".

* One scholar said: " Indeed the Qur'an was revealed to be acted upon, but the people took its reciting as a vocation. At that it was asked, "What is acting upon it? " So he replied, "Accepting as halal what is mentioned in it as halal, and as haraam what is mentioned as haram. To act upon its orders, abstain from all it prohibits and to ponder over its wonders".

* It has been said with regard to saying of Allah the Most High

"(they) recite it as it should be recited". (2:121)

"They follow it as it should be followed, acting upon it". (3)

* If Allah intends good for a servant he opens for him the door of action and closes for him the door of argumentation. Whereas if Allah intends for a servant evil (4), He opens for him the door of argumentation, and closes for him the door of action".

* "We used to seek aid in memorising the hadeeths by acting upon them".

* "You may meet a man not finding one mistake in his speech yet his actions may be completely at fault."

* We have not been given ignorance but we hide the face of knowledge through ignorance. We detest making mistakes in our speech yet we do not care about making mistakes in our actions.

* And you will not possess on the Day of Resurrection other than what you ascertained before death. If you do not sow the seeds and the harvest approaches you, you will regret not having done so when the time was right.

* When you find yourself in need of provisions You will not find provisions the like of righteous actions

* One of the scholars saw his neighbours wandering aimlessly, so he asked them, "What is the matter with you?" They replied, "We have finished our duties of the day." So he said, "And is this what the one with no duties has been ordered with?"

* "The people who will be most accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be the healthy ones who had free time".

* "Take advantage of your spare time by engaging in prayers For maybe your death will come suddenly So many a healthy person you may have seen His life snatched away from him unexpectedly."

* Some people invited a man to eat with them who in turn said, "I am fasting". They said to him, "Break your fast today and instead fast tomorrow". So he said, "And who will guarantee my living tomorrow?"

* It was said to a scholar, "Advise us". So he said, "Beware of saying "soon"."

* Beware of procrastination overcoming you and taking over your heart for verily it is the cause of fatigue and wastefulness. Due to it, aspirations are severed and amidst it, death is met.

EPILOGUE

This is all that Allah swt granted me the ability to write. I hope that it will be a source of guidance to its writer as well as its reader. As I hope that it will be an incentive for them towards action and sincerity in accordance to the Prophetic Way and correct knowledge. Verily He, the Most High, is the All Hearer, the All Answerer. Our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

(1) tr. "The Need Knowledge has of Action".

(2) I have removed the names that the sayings were attributed to fearing inauthenticity in the original attribution, except where the authenticity is established. Soem statements have also been slightly abridged.

(3) Ibn Kathir mentions in his Tafsir, "If the reciter reaches mention of paradise, he beseeches Allah the Most High to grant him Paradise. If he reaches mention of the Fire, he seeks refuge with Allah the Most High from it." He also mentions, "Abu al 'Aliyah said, Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said, "By Him, in Who's Hand is my soul, reciting it as it should be recited is to consider its halal as halal and its haram as haram. To recite it as Allah revealed it without distorting its words, not falsely explaining its intended meanings."

(4) Once the servant has decided to follow such a path, Allah the Most High, allows him to take such a path