

Counsel to Teach Sacred Knowledge to One's Family & Relatives

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

To proceed: This discourse relates to teaching one's family and relatives the religious sciences. Fathers, mothers, guardians, and caretakers must teach their children, families, servants, and all those in their care what is required of them religiously. This includes belief, the Prayer, *Zakāt*, fasting, and Hajj. They must be taught these things and be instructed to act in accordance with them.

They must also be taught what actions are forbidden, such as fornication, sodomy, revealing one's nakedness, stealing, treachery and lying, backbiting and talebearing, arrogance, envy, ostentation, and so forth. They must be instructed to avoid these things. If parents and guardians are neglectful in teaching them these things, then they have betrayed and wronged their dependents.

Imam al-Ghazālī says in the *Ihyā*: It is said that on the Day of Resurrection, the first thing a man is judged on is his family and children. They will push him to stand before Allah ﷻ and they will say, 'Our Lord, take our rights from him! He did not teach us what we had to know, and he would feed us unlawful food without our knowledge.' Allah then takes their rights from him. The Prophet ﷺ said, '*The greatest sin one meets Allah with is his family's ignorance.*'

'Alqama narrates from his father who narrates it from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*What is it with people who do not teach their neighbors, nor educate or remind them? They do not command them to do what is right nor forbid them from what is wrong. And what is it with people who do not learn from their neighbors, nor seek to be educated or reminded by them? By Allah, a group of people will teach their neighbors, remind them, command them to what is right and forbid them from what is wrong, and a group of people will learn from their neighbors and be reminded, or their punishment will most certainly come down swiftly upon them in this life.*" [Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Wajdān*, Ibn 'Asākir, and others]

If this is the responsibility that neighbors have towards each other, then what of family members!

One must teach his family important aspects of creed (*'aqīda*) such as: Allah is One without partner; there is nothing like Him, yet He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing; and that His Messenger ﷺ is truthful in everything he conveyed. He should also teach them to follow the way of the Pious Predecessors, and to believe entirely in all that was revealed in the Quran and Sunna,

without requiring research, inquiry, and questions about details. Rather, they should say, “We believe and affirm.” Parents should engage their children in things that strengthen their mindfulness of Allah and teach them to avoid sins, observe acts of obedience, show compassion to all Muslims, and other such righteous actions.

As for the Prayer, they should teach their children that it is an obligation, and whoever denies it commits disbelief and is to be executed as an apostate if he does not repent. Whoever abandons it out of laziness is also executed if he does not repent. Boys and girls who are seven years old and able to discern between right and wrong should be instructed to pray, and once they reach the age of ten, they are hit if they do not pray.

The Prayer has many rulings, some of which are obligatory and others that are recommended. One must remove impurities (*najāsa*) from one’s body, clothing, place of prayer, and from anything one is carrying with him. These include feces, urine, blood, alcohol that intoxicates, dog, swine, and carcasses (except the dead bodies of humans, fish, and insects). It is obligatory to wash these off unless it is excusable, such as blood from a wound, from a flea, and from a fly (even if it is a lot)—it is not an obligation to wash these off.

Washing these impurities, and washing oneself, must be done with water that purifies. This means water that has not had foreign items mixed into it, such that it would not be known as water. Or that its taste, color, or smell changed due to something impure being added to it, even if only a small amount. Or that something impure is added to it and the amount of water is less than *qullatayn*, unless it is something excused such as something that had died but had no blood dripping from it, nor did someone put it there, and it did not change the water. Or the water is less than *qullatayn* and had been used to wash oneself or to wash off an impurity.

It is obligatory to clean oneself from everything wet that exits the two waste passages with stones (or something like it, if it meets the requirements) or with water. It is forbidden to face the Qibla or to give one’s back to it when urinating or defecating, unless behind a wall that is at least two-thirds an arm-span high and that is no further from him than three arm-spans. If the wall is further than three arm-spans from him, it is disliked, unless it is constructed that way.

Cleaning impurities is an obligation. This is done by allowing the water to flow over the affected area, when the water available is less than *qullatayn*. One continues to wash the affected area until whatever taste, color, or smell are removed. One must wash six the affected area six more times if the impurity comes from a dog, mixing clean earth with water for one of the washings. When cleaning off impurities, it is a Sunna to rub the affected area and wash it three times, without being obsessive. If a fluid becomes impure, it cannot be purified.

Wuḍū' is a prerequisite for the Prayer. This is done by performing the *wuḍū'* intending in one's heart to be in a state of purity for the Prayer or to remove its preventative cause (*raf' ḥadath*). Then he washes his entire face from the hairline up to and including the chin. This includes all skin and hair in the area between the ears, except for the hair within a man's beard and on his jawline if the hair is thick. He must wash any secretion from the eyes, if there is any, and its like. The same is true for the other limbs.

Then he must wash his hands up to and including his elbows. He then must wipe part of his head or hair that is not extended away from the scalp. He then washes his feet, including the ankles. He makes *wuḍū'* in this order.

Wuḍū' has many Sunnas, such as using the *siwāk*, saying "*Bismillāh*" (even if it is while one is making *wuḍū'*), washing the hands up to the wrist, followed by rinsing the mouth and nose (doing so vigorously for one who is not fasting), extending the area of the *wuḍū'*s radiance and brilliance, wiping the entire head and the ears, washing between the fingers, repeating each action of the *wuḍū'* three times, rubbing each of the limbs when washing them, performing the *wuḍū'* with continuity, declaring the Two Testimonies of Faith after completing the *wuḍū'*, then praying two *rak'as*.

If one must perform *ghusl* due to intercourse, the emission of semen, the cessation of the menstrual cycle or postpartum bleeding, or giving birth, it is an obligation to wash the entire body with the intention of removing the greater ritual impurity. It is Sunna to perform *wuḍū'*, remove any impurity from the body, making sure water gets to the hard-to-reach parts of the body, washing each area three times, rubbing the body when washing, saying "*Bismillāh*," and declaring the Two Testimonies of Faith after completion.

Anything that exits from the two waste passages invalidates the *wuḍū'*, as does sleep (except if a person is sitting firmly upright), loss of consciousness, touching a human's genitals and anus with the palm of the hand, and when a man and woman's skin touches (except if they are an unmarriageable relative or child; and when hair, teeth, and nails touch, this does not invalidate *wuḍū'*).

It is Sunna to perform *wuḍū'* from bleeding, cupping, or a nosebleed, or when falling asleep when sitting firmly upright, and after eating camel meat.

It is unlawful for someone whose *wuḍū'* is invalidated to perform the Prayer, circumambulate the Ka'ba, and carry or touch a copy of the Quran (*muṣḥaf*). In addition to these things, it is unlawful for someone in a state of greater ritual impurity (*janāba*) to remain in the mosque and recite the Quran. It is unlawful for a woman who is menstruating to do the aforementioned, to fast, and to let her husband enjoy what is between her navel and her knees.

Menstruation can occur at nine years of age. The shortest length of a cycle is an entire day and night, though it most often takes six or seven days, and the longest it can last is fifteen days. The shortest length of purity between two menstrual cycles is fifteen days.

The shortest postpartum bleeding can last is for a moment, though it most often lasts for forty days, and the longest it can last is for sixty days. Whatever is unlawful during menstruation is unlawful during postpartum bleeding. If it begins and enough time had passed for her to pray after the Prayer had entered, she must make up that Prayer. If it ceases during a Prayer time, even for the length of time it takes to say, “*Allāhu Akbar*,” then that Prayer is obligatory, as is the Prayer before it if that Prayer is either *Zuhr* or *Maghrib*.

Praying a Prayer before its time has entered or delaying it until its time has passed without a valid excuse is a major sin.

The time for *Zuhr* enters when the Sun moves past its zenith until when an object’s shadow is equal to its length (minus the length of the residual shadow).

After it is ‘*Aṣr*, which lasts until the sun sets.

After that is *Maghrib*, which lasts until the red glow along the horizon disappears.

After that is ‘*Ishā*, which lasts until the rising of the true dawn that spreads across the horizon.

The true dawn signals the entry of the time of *Ṣubḥ*, which lasts until the sun rises.

The best of actions is to hasten to pray at the beginning of the Prayer time. It is obligatory to face the *Qibla*, for a man and female slave to cover what is between the navel and knee, and for a free woman to cover her entire body, except her face and hands.

One must avoid things that invalidate the Prayer. This includes speaking, even if two letters, or one letter that conveys meaning; a large number of movements, such as three consecutive moments; adding an essential movement intentionally; eating what would break someone’s fast or eating a large amount of food; and intending to interrupt the Prayer and being indecisive about doing so. The Prayer is not invalidated by a small amount of speech one utters forgetfully or that it outside of their control.

The Prayer has thirteen essential elements:

1. One makes an intention in his heart to perform the Prayer. If the Prayer has a cause or time, he should specify it. If it is an obligatory Prayer, he should make that specific intention.

It is *Sunna* to say the intention out loud, adding, “...and I doing so for Allah the Exalted,” specify the number of *rak‘as*, specify whether it is a Prayer in its time or a make-up Prayer, call the *Adhān* and *Iqāma*, and to use the *siwāk* before that.

2. Saying, “*Allāhu Akbar*” while the intention is present in his heart. It is Sunna to raise one’s hands to the height of the earlobes as one is saying, “*Allāhu Akbar.*”
3. Standing in the obligatory Prayer if he is able to. If he is unable to, he can sit. If he cannot sit, then he can pray lying down on his side. If he cannot do that, he can lay down on his back with his feet facing the Qibla and his head should be raised, if he is able, to face the Qibla. He completes the *rukū’* and *sujūd*, if he is able to. If he is unable to, then he does so by bowing his head. If he cannot do that, then by moving his eyes. If he cannot do that, then with his heart.
4. Reciting the Fātiḥa. It is a Sunna to recite the opening *du‘ā* in the first *rak‘a*, and to say, “*A‘ūdhu billāhi min al-shayṭān al-rajīm*” [I seek refuge in Allah from the repudiated devil] before the Fātiḥa in each *rak‘a*, to say, “*Āmīn*” after it, to recite some other verses of the Quran (it is better to recite an entire Sūra), and to recite out loud at its times.
5. Bowing (*rukū’*), bending such that his palms reach his knees. It is Sunna to grasp the knees, to extend one’s back and neck so that they are horizontal, and to say, “*Subḥān Rabbī al-‘Azīm*” [Glory belongs to my Lord, the Supreme] three times.
6. Rising until he stands up as he previously was. It is Sunna to raise his hands as he bows into *rukū’* while saying, “*Allāhu Akbar*” and as he rises up, saying instead, “*Sami‘a Allāhu liman ḥamida*” [Allah hears those who praise Him]. When he is standing erect, he says, “*Rabbanā laka al-ḥamd mil’ al-samawāti wa mil’ al-arḍ, wa mil’ ma shi’ta min shayy’in ba’d*” [Our Lord, all praise belongs to You, filling the skies and filling the earth, and filling whatever else You will].
7. Prostrating twice with even just a part of his exposed forehead on something that is not connected to his body that moves with his movement. Prostrating with the head bearing weight and lowered, and placing some part of the inner surface of his hands, bottom surface of his toes, and some part of his knees on the place of Prayer. It is Sunna to place one’s nose on the place of Prayer, and *takhwīya* and *mujāfā* (distancing his arms from his sides, allowing for space between the knees, and lifting his stomach away from his knees) are Sunnas for men. One should say in *sujūd*, “*Subḥān Rabbī al-A‘lā*” [Glory belongs to my Lord, the Most High] three times.
8. Sitting between the two prostrations, and one must have a moment of repose in this position and the previous three. It is Sunna to say, “*Rabb ighfir lī warḥamnī, wajburnī warfa’nī, warzuqnī wahdinī, wa ‘āfinī wa’fu ‘annī*” [My Lord, forgive and

have mercy on me, restore and elevate me, provide for and guide me, and grant me well-being and pardon me].

9. The final *tashahhud*.
10. Sitting during the final *tashahhud*.
11. Sending blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ after the first *tashahhud*.
12. The closing *salām*, the minimum of which is to say, “*Assalāmu ‘alaykum*” and it is Sunna to add, “*wa raḥmatullāh,*” as is the second *salām*.
13. The order we mentioned above. If he contradicts it, the Prayer is not valid.

The following are also Sunna:

- The first *tashahhud* (except in the Ṣubḥ Prayer)
- The *Qunūt Du‘ā* in the Ṣubḥ Prayer
- Saying, “*Allāhu Akbar*” between movements
- Focusing one’s gaze on the place of prostration
- Having the right hand grasp over the left hand when standing in Prayer
- Sitting briefly before standing up (after the 2nd prostration)
- Sitting in the *iftirāsh* position except in the final *tashahhud* where one sits in *tawarruk*
- Placing one’s hands near one’s knees when sitting, keeping them neither entirely open nor in a fist
- In the two *tashahhuds*, he closes his right fist, except for his index finger, while bringing his thumb in
- That he prays before an object that is at least three armlengths high and he is not further away than three armlengths from it. If he does not find such an object, then he can unfold a prayer rug, but it then becomes forbidden to walk in front of him

It is also Sunna to:

- Have reverential awe (*khushū‘*) and presence of heart, and this is the core and essence of the Prayer
- To pray at the beginning of the Prayer time in congregation
- To make *du‘ā* at the end of the Prayer and after its completion

It is disliked to look around during the Prayer, to look into the sky or at anything that distracts him, to pray when he needs to relieve himself or when he is craving food.

Whenever someone is uncertain of the number of *rak'as* he has prayed, he should rely on the lesser number. Or if he is uncertain about performing any essential element of the Prayer, he should then do it and perform the prostration of forgetfulness, unless it was verbal.

As for **Zakat**, it is one of the pillars of Islam. Whoever refuses it has disbelieved. It is required only for camels, cows, and livestock, gold, silver, and trade assets, on the condition of the minimum amount (*niṣāb*) and the passing of a full year—except the passing of a full year is not a condition in the case of what is extracted from mines and treasure.

It is an obligation to give Zakat on dates, grapes, grains that are used and stored as foodstuffs if they are 100 *qahūls* according to the Sharia *mudd* measurement. The amount owed is one-tenth (10%) if it is irrigated without cost; if it is irrigated with a cost, then half of that (5%) is owed. He gives it out to any eligible recipients from the eight categories with the intention of Zakat. The intention is formed after he has already separated the amount owed from the rest and before giving it away.

Zakat al-Fiṭr is an obligation, and it is four *mudd*'s worth of staple food of the land. One gives it away on behalf of himself and all those he cares for. This is if he has excess wealth after taking into consideration his food for the night before and day of Eid, his debts, housing, and clothing. He should give it out after sunset on the last day of Ramadan.

As for **fasting Ramadan**, it is one of the pillars of Islam. Whoever refuses it has disbelieved. Therefore, every Muslim who is of age, is sane, and is not on her menstrual cycle, and is able to, must fast. A woman who is on her menses or has postpartum bleeding must make up the fast.

Its conditions are:

- Intention to fast
- Specifying the fast
- Making the intention the night before, in the case of an obligatory fast
- Refraining, from the time of Fajr to Maghrib, from inducing vomiting, masturbation, intercourse, allowing anything to enter any open cavity—even one's saliva if it becomes impure, is mixed with another substance, or it had left its place of origin

As for the **Hajj to the Sacred House**, it is one of the pillars of Islam. Performing Hajj and 'Umrah once in one's life is an obligation, for whoever is able to do so. When one wishes to perform it, it becomes obligatory for him to learn its essentials, obligations, and forbidden actions.

Likewise, one must learn these aspects regarding any transactions he engages in, such as selling and leasing, marriage, and the like. One must learn what is permissible and what is forbidden regarding these things.

In *al-Mūjiz*, it states, it is obligatory to:

- Be sincere for the sake of Allah in all acts of worship. Do not seek through these actions any reward from creation, praise from them, or have any fear of them.
- Give sincere counsel to Allah's servants and never to deceive nor withhold any good from another Muslim
- Obey the ruler in anything that is not sinful, and guide them to good, if one is able to
- Obey your parents' commands, have good manners with them in speech and action, and give them if they are in need, and to protect one's father from intemperance
- Raise one's child and accustom him to doing good and abandoning evil, and to provide for the child when he is incapable of caring for himself. You must teach your child what is obligatory and what is forbidden after coming of age by way of nocturnal emission in the case of boy, menstruation in the case of girls, or the child reaching fifteen years of age. You should tell the child to pray and fast, if he is able to, when he reaches seven years of age and is able to discern between right and wrong. When the child reaches ten years of age, he should be hit for not praying or fasting.
- Maintain family ties, even if just through kind words. Family ties include any relative from the father or mother's side.
- Provide for one's wife with kindness, which includes financial support, clothing, and a dwelling that suits her. He should teach her the rulings related to marriage, menstruation, and postpartum bleeding. They should live together in the spirit of kindness. She should not allow anyone he dislikes to enter his home or leave the house without his permission. She should obey him in all he tells her so long as it is not sinful, and she should not reject his advances even if she is cooking.

- Provide for one's slave, which includes financial support and clothing. One should not give him a burden beyond his capacity. The slave must obey his master in all that he is able to do and have good manners with him in speech and action.
- Give respite to someone in difficulty and accepting an invitation to a wedding, unless one has a valid excuse.
- Be kind towards the believers and keeping company with the best of them, and being kind to one's relatives, neighbors, in-laws, and friends. One's religious teachers and scholars are even more deserving of one's kindness and good treatment.
- Abide by the Sacred Laws in transactions, such as selling, leasing, mortgages, etc.
- Command what is good and forbid what is undeniably wrong.
- Fulfill one's vow to perform an act of obedience.
- Patiently endure what Allah has decreed. Do not show anguish and complain about His decree.
- This is the most important obligation: to repent with remorse over one's sin, to abandon the sin, and to resolve never to repeat it. And to appease the one whose wealth, honor, or person you harmed. Repentance should be renewed whenever one commits a sin.
- Respond to the *salām* of the one who initiates it, except when a young girl conveys it to a man who is not related to her.
- Circumcise one who has come of age but was not previously circumcised, male or female. Before coming of age, it is a Sunna for a guardian to do so, if he is able to.

As for the Sunnas, they are very many:

- Initiating the *salām* to someone of the same gender, one's *maḥram*, an elderly person, and a group of women.
- Renewing one's *wuḍū'* when:
 - One has already prayed with that *wuḍū'*.
 - If one has eaten camel meat, in which case it is even more highly emphasized.
 - For a person who is in *janāba* who wants to engage in intercourse, to sleep, or to eat. He should make *wuḍū'* and also wash his private part.

- For a male to call the *Adhān* for the obligatory Prayers, and for all to call the *Iqāma*.
- Consistently praying the Prayers in the beginning of their times and in congregation.
- The Prostration of Recitation (*Sajdat al-Tilāwa*) for the reciter, the listener, and the one who overhears. As for the Prostration of Gratitude (*Sajdat al-Shukr*), it is not done during the Prayer. Rather, it is done when a blessing arrives suddenly, a tribulation is warded off, or one sees another person who is afflicted in their religion, etc.
- Offering the sacrifice every year during Eid al-Aḍḥā.
- Having a *‘aqīqa* for every newborn.
- Hosting and honoring guests according to one’s ability. Formality is disliked.
- Shaking hands whenever meeting someone.
- Jihad—which could sometimes be an individual or communal obligation.
- To give a loan, charity, endowment, free someone from bondage, a gift, or to absolve someone’s debt.
- The wedding feast (*walīma*)
- Circumcision
- Mutual visitation and visiting the sick
- Following a funeral procession and visiting the graveyards
- Saying, “*Yarḥamuka Allah*” after someone sneezes
- Using the *siwāk* (which is fulfilled by anything coarse) especially before Prayer, *wuḍū’*, sleeping, and after waking up.
- Applying kohl to the eyes and odd number of times every night
- Applying oil once in a while
- Clipping the nails
- Trimming the moustache
- Removing the hair from the privates and underarms. Delaying their removal is disliked and performing *ghusl* after doing this is good.

Unacceptable things are of two types: the forbidden and disliked. Forbidden things are considered either major or minor sins.

The major sins include:

- Murder
- Fornication and sodomy
- Stealing
- False accusation
- Fleeing from the battlefield
- Consuming intoxicants
- Intercourse during menstruation
- Appropriating someone else's property
- Perjury
- A false oath

As well as:

- Mistreating parents in a way that is clearly harmful
- Severing family ties
- Squandering wealth that belongs to an orphan
- Consuming wealth from usury (*ribā*) and being involved in usurious transactions
- Falsifying the weigh scale when selling, and so forth

And:

- Abandoning the Prayer, praying it before its time, or delaying it beyond its time without a valid excuse
- Forsaking Zakat
- Not fasting Ramadan
- Failing to perform an obligatory act of worship without a valid excuse
- Abandoning Hajj, for one who is able to do so, until he dies
- Judging by other than the truth
- Withholding witness
- Wrongfully hitting another Muslim
- Insulting the Companions
- Speaking ill of scholars
- Seeking out oppressors to inform them of something that would harm the Muslims, even if it was true; as is accepting that testimony
- Eating carrion

- Highway robbery
- Magic
- Forgetting the Quran
- Burning animals
- Talebearing, as this spoils the relationships between Muslims
- Lying about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ
- Despairing of Allah's mercy
- Feeling secure from Allah's decree
- Showing off (*riyā'*) with devotion that is for Allah, which is to do those acts to impress people
- Backbiting, which is to mention something about your brother that he does not like, even if it is true. This is only permissible in when providing counsel, remove some wrongdoing, or addressing something being done publicly. Silently listening to someone backbiting when being able to stop them is also sinful.
- Lying
- Imitating another Muslim and mocking him either in words or actions
- Neglecting to command what is right and forbid what is wrong (regarding clear things that are authoritatively prohibited) when one is physically able to. Otherwise, one does so with his words. If he cannot, then he does so with his heart and distances himself from that thing.
- Giving a Fatwa without knowledge
- Wailing over a deceased person and expressing one's distress by tearing one's clothing
- Drawing a living creature
- Envy, which is hating good for another Muslim and loving harm to befall him. Whoever feels any of this, he should reject and hate it, and make *du'ā* for the person he feels envious of.
- Insulting and wrongfully harming another Muslim
- Admiring one's actions (*'ujb*), which means that he sees the good deed coming from himself, not as a gift from Allah ﷻ. This invalidates the reward of the action or lessens its reward.
- Reminding someone of charity that he had given him, seeking favor. This invalidates the charity's reward.

Minor sins include:

- Looking at or listening to something forbidden, except when being a witness, to remove it, or when being forced to. He must get away from that thing, if he is able.
- Looking into a Muslim's home
- Cutting off another Muslim for more than three days without a valid excuse from the Sacred Law
- Sitting with a corrupt person and enjoying his company
- Walking over people's shoulders in the mosque
- Facing the Qibla or giving one's back to it when urinating or excreting outside and without a cover
- Masturbation except by the hand of one's spouse
- Touching an unrelated woman and being alone with her
- Looking at a woman with desire, unless she is his spouse
- A woman traveling without her husband, *mahram*, or a group of trustworthy women
- Selling a defective item without disclosing its defect
- Deceiving and betraying another Muslim
- Uncovering one's nakedness (*'awra*), even when alone if without a reason
- Allowing another person to see one's nakedness, unless it is one's spouse
- For men:
 - Dying white hair black
 - Using henna, except for his hair
 - Wearing and using gold
 - Wearing silk or a material that is mostly made of silk, unless there is a need
- For men to resemble women and vice versa
- For someone who has wealth or work to beg
- Enmity, which is to conceal ill will towards another Muslim; and having a bad opinion of another Muslim. These are sinful unless one hates feeling these sentiments.
- Playing and listening to the *rabab*, *ṭunbūr*, and flute

As for disliked actions (*makrūh*), they are many:

- Disputation and excessive arguing from someone who is right
- Excessive joking
- Speaking excessively about frivolous things, which are neither beneficial to talk about nor harmful to refrain from, except when out of kindness to one's wife, guest, or any other Muslim (to the extent necessary)
- Socializing after 'Ishā Prayer, except for the reasons mentioned previously, or if engaged in goodness
- Excessive laughing, which deadens the heart
- Allowing the following to enter a mosque:
 - an insane person
 - a child who might make it dirty
 - someone who has eaten something that exudes an unpleasant smell (it has also been said that in this case, it is forbidden for him to enter the mosque)
- Eating past the point of satiety
- Always having lavish meals
- Building tall buildings unnecessarily
- Fantasizing about women
- Speaking lustfully during intercourse
- Looking at the private parts of one's spouse
- For a man to pray by himself. This is severely disliked and indicates either obvious idiocy or hidden disbelief. We ask Allah for wellbeing.
- Engaging in something doubtful in action or speech

Conclusion

You now know, based on the aforementioned, that *taqwā* is to firmly abide by the Sharia's commandments and prohibitions. The Sharia has five rulings:

Obligatory (*wājib*): What the Sharia has made obligatory. Whoever acts according to this is given reward and whoever fails to do so is sinful.

Recommended (*mandūb*): What is encouraged but not an obligation. Whoever acts according to this is given reward and whoever fails to do so is missing out but not sinful.

Forbidden (*ḥarām*): What is absolutely prohibited. Whoever does such an act is sinful and exposes himself to punishment.

Disliked (*makrūh*): What is discouraged, but not prohibited. Whoever does such an act exposes himself to blame without punishment, but whoever refrains from something forbidden or disliked for Allah's sake is granted reward.

Permissible (*mubāḥ*): That which there is no reward nor punishment in doing it or refraining from it. It is true that doing such an action to strengthen oneself to obey Allah, if it assists in doing so, is good. Although being excessive in permissible things to satisfy one's desires is a waste of time and is seeking comfort in fleeting things, which is the path to tragic actions.

Whoever obeys Allah is indisputably saved. But whoever disobeys Allah by denying His Oneness, His Perfect Attributes, the sending of Prophets, Books, anything from the Quran that is mass-transmitted, the Resurrection, a ruling from the Sharia that he knows is unanimously agreed upon, or making light of anything Allah has certainly exalted (such as the Prophet or a copy of the Quran), then he is a disbeliever whose life is violable and will eternally be in the Fire if he does not repent.

Whoever disobeys Allah by way of major sins or is persistent in minor sins, he is a corrupt person (*fāsiq*) whose testimony is inadmissible and is subject to punishment if he does not repent and receive Allah's pardon. For someone who is less sinful, his affair belongs to Allah, and it is hoped that he will be pardoned.

Being Wary of Acts that are Disliked

Whoever takes good manners lightly is punished by losing the Sunnas. Whoever takes the Sunnas lightly is punished by losing the obligations. Whoever takes the obligations lightly loses belief—and actions are judged based on endings.

It is feared that someone who is habituated to and persistent in disobedience will suffer an evil ending to life, which is to die in a state of disbelief. We seek protection in Allah from that and ask Him to grant us wellbeing from every calamity.

Engaging in disliked things pulls one towards forbidden actions. The most comprehensive way to be safe from all disliked things is for a person to think about what state he must be in when he dies, then remains steadfast upon that, and for him to treat people the way he would like to be treated.

Purification of the Soul

Allah ﷻ says, **“The soul and [the One] Who fashioned it, then inspired it with [the knowledge of] right and wrong. Successful indeed is the one who purifies it, and doomed is the one who corrupts it.”** [Quran 91:7-10]

Know that purification consists of cleansing oneself from filth outward and inwardly, and this is complete *taqwā*. And corruption is the opposite. The lower self (*nafs*), with its corrupt nature, love for the worldly life, and due to Satan’s deceiving it, has a love for the world and inclines towards it without considering the ultimate end. The one blessed with enabling grace is the one who regulates it with the reins of beneficial knowledge and forces it to act in according with it. This work takes a long time, but in comparison to the Hereafter, it is brief. You are not able to achieve this except with patience.

Having patience in fulfilling the obligations and refraining from the forbidden is an obligation, and it is recommended when engaging in extra devotions. Being patient when facing calamities and difficulties, which is obligatory, is done by refraining from being in shock and complaining about Allah. It is recommended to be patient beyond the minimum. Exhibiting patient when being harmed by letting go of restitution is recommended and has great virtue. Patience in other things is also obligatory.

Being grateful to Allah by knowing that every blessing is from Him is an obligation. Bring this realization to heart in every state is a great foundation in religion. Verbally expressing

thanks to Allah is an obligation, which is to praise Him for His gracious treatment. One such statement is, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*” [All praise belongs to Allah]. Gratitude is expressed through action by obeying Him, which is an obligation for obligatory acts and is a Sunna for recommended acts.

Being content with Allah’s decree by being silent of expressing disapproval is an obligation. Opposing the defiance of the lower self, its nature, and its agitation is good; doing this while bringing the heart back to a state of presence is even better.

Whatever a person committed of sins or disliked actions, or he abandoned of obligatory acts, he should be content in that it was Allah’s decree that those things would happen, but he hates those actions because Allah hates them and has forbidden those things. He should feel distressed in that he disobeyed Allah’s command, which deserves His punishment.

Patience and gratitude are two pillars of religion, everything requires one or the other. Performing any act of obedience, refraining from any disobedience, and holding to a particular state all require patience.

Whoever truly seeks Allah’s help, He gives it. Whoever places his trust in Him, He suffices him. But whoever forgets Allah, He causes him to forget himself, as has come in the Quran.

Principles of Religion

In all states a servant must have three things by which his religion is properly arranged:

1. **Intention:** He must only engage in or refrain from something purely and sincerely for Allah alone. This intention must remain until he has completed that action. When engaging in permissible actions, he intends to preserve his dignity and protect himself and his family from difficulties, fulfill the rights of others, have mindfulness of Allah in acts of obedience, and when being considerate of other people’s feeling. Intention does not change sins at all.

2. **Reflecting on the marvels of Allah’s creation in the earthly and heavenly realm:** Reflecting on His angels, constellations, light, darkness, animals, plant life, and inanimate objects that one knows of (and the things he does not know of are greater and more numerous). One should reflect on these various things and their subtle wisdom and perfection, as there is not one atom missing from these, despite their magnitude, multitude, groups, and types. Contemplating their intricate and evident qualities that are present in each moment is

something that helps you understand that He is the All-Knowing, the Most Capable, and that is nothing remotely like Him, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

This is an ocean that people could dedicate their lives to yet remain at the shore. It is the door to direct knowledge of Allah, so keep to it with reflection that is pure, and you will find that it is the antidote.

Also reflect on the nearness of death and that its time is unknown. Rather, it comes suddenly, not at a specified age. Once it comes, regret is of no benefit. Even if someone lives a long life, it will come. Each hour of a person's life is either for him or against him. If he engages in acts of obedience, then it is for him; if he engages in something else, then he experiences ceaseless regret. Many a person attained his goal in the world, yet was worthless when he died!

3. **Not to take more than what is sufficient from the world for himself and those in his care:** wealth, clothing, and housing. One should take only what he needs and be content. When someone takes more than what he needs, he harms himself without realizing it.

When a person understands death—that it is the door to the Hereafter, that too much of the world is harmful because the permissible things in it lengthen one's Reckoning and the forbidden things from it are a punishment—it becomes easy for him to suffice himself with what a traveler needs on a journey. He should detach himself from the world if he can, otherwise he should content himself with little. If he cannot do that, then he should be patient.

Detachment (*zuhd*) is to distance oneself from the world and only take what is absolutely needed. Contentment is for someone to be at peace with what has been allotted to him without desiring what others have. If he is unable to do that, then he should oppose that sentiment. Being patient in this case means to regulate the lower self despite it being difficult. Each of these are good, and **“they will each be assigned ranks according to their deeds.”** [Quran 6:132]

Foundational Acts of Devotion

Some of the foundational religious acts that bring someone closer to Allah ﷻ are devotional Prayers, extra fasting, recitation of the Quran, learning and teaching beneficial knowledge, and remembering Allah ﷻ. Remembrance is comprehensive because every obedient servant is remembering Allah and the commandments were given only so people would remember Allah. Another is *du'ā*, especially during the times, places, and occasions where it is expected to be answered.

Also, giving charity, which is achieved even with just a little, and doing so in virtuous times and giving to relatives, neighbors, the needy, and the righteous is even better.

Sunna Prayers

Prayer is the best act of worship. It is only forbidden to pray when the sun is at its zenith, except on Friday, after the *Ṣubḥ* Prayer until the sun rises a length of a spear above the horizon, and after the *‘Aṣr* Prayer until sunset (unless due to a cause that is not associated with that time). It is also forbidden to pray after the *khaṭīb* ascends the pulpit, except the Sunna Prayer of entering the mosque (*taḥīyyat al-masjid*).

The most emphasized of these Prayers are the two Eid Prayers, the Solar and Lunar Eclipse Prayers, and the Prayer for Rain. One should perform *ghusl* and clean himself for them. He should dress well for the two Eid Prayers, which are prayed after sunrise (preferably after the sun has risen the length of a spear) until midday.

Each of these prayers consist of two *rak‘as*, although with the two Eclipse Prayers it is Sunna to add a second standing after the bowing in which he recites Quran a second time. Then, he bows a second time, rising after that and then going into prostration. He should be very lengthy in his recitation during this Prayer, as well as the glorification when bowing and prostrating. The first *rak‘a* is the longest, then successively shorter with each *rak‘a*.

In the two Eid Prayers and the Prayer for Rain, he should say an additional, “*Allāhu Akbar*” seven times in the first *rak‘a* before reciting Quran, and five times in the second *rak‘a*, remembering Allah between each of them. He should recite audibly in these Prayers, except for the Solar Eclipse Prayer.

The *Witr* Prayer is after the *‘Ishā* Prayer until Fajr. Its minimum is one *rak‘a*, and the lowest satisfactory amount is three *rak‘as*. Its maximum is eleven *rak‘as*.

Tarawīḥ Prayer is twenty *rak‘as*. The *Ḍuḥā* Prayer is from two to eight *rak‘as* and is prayed after the sun has risen the length of a spear until it reaches its zenith.

The emphasized Sunna Prayers (*rawātib*) are two *rak‘as* before the *Ṣubḥ* Prayer, four *rak‘as* before *Zuḥr* and four after, four before *‘Aṣr*, two before *Maghrib* and two after, two before *‘Ishā* and two after.

The Prayer for Entering the Mosque is two *rak‘as*. Giving life to the night (*qiyām al-layl*) is attained even through remembrance of Allah ﷻ, *du‘ā*, and seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*).

Giving life to the time between Maghrib and ‘Ishā with Prayer is also highly emphasized, and if one does not pray, then with other devotions.

Foundational Principles of the Path

Fasting the Day of ‘Arafa is emphasized, as is ‘Āshūrā and the day preceding it (the 9th and 10th of Muḥarram), and three days of every month (preferably the White Days), the six days of Shawwāl, and fasting extensively in the sacred months.

He says at the end of the book: I decided to conclude the book with three foundational principles of the path to Allah ﷻ.

1. Only eat the amount needed to maintain one’s intellect and strength, only sleep when overcome, only speak when necessary or for a particular need, and do not sit with people except when it is a must or for a religious benefit.

2. Oppose the lower self’s every gratification except what is needed, or in something that the Sharia recommends. Maintain constant remembrance and have presence of heart with Allah in it.

3. Leave aside your pleasures and desires for those actions Allah that seeks from you. Submit to Him in His decrees, turn your affairs over to His plan except for what He has commanded you to do such as seek a livelihood and what actions are required for your state on the spiritual path. Whoever Allah is with, He suffices, “**And sufficient is Allah as a [vigilant] Reckoner.**” [Quran 33:39]

This concludes the abridged transcription of that which Allah made easy from the book, *al-Mūjiz al-Mubīn* by Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah bin Muhammad Bā-Qushayr al-Ḥadramī. Some of it was quoted verbatim, and some of what was shared was its meaning. On rare occasion a few words were added for clarification and added benefit.

The Prophetic Invocations

Of the things that deserve consideration and care from everyone are the invocations from the Prophet ﷺ related to various times such as the morning and the evening; and the invocations related to various occasions such as when eating or drinking, sleeping and rising, before, during,

and after the Prayer, leaving and entering the mosque, home, restroom, and so forth; and unrestricted invocations that are wide-ranging and comprehensive, which would take too long to mention. Each person should take a portion of these invocations that he can be consistent in with excellence. They are protective and shield one from unpleasant things. If someone neglects these invocations and then experiences something unpleasant, let him only blame himself.

Counsels from *The Beginning of Guidance*

We will quote some of what Imam al-Ghazālī said in *The Beginning of Guidance*¹ with some omission, abridging some of what he said verbatim and some of the lessons. Some words are added for benefit or clarification. We will separate it into sections to make it easier to read:

To proceed: know, you who are desirous of acquiring sacred knowledge, expressing in yourself a sincere longing and a passionate thirst for it—and the same is said to someone who recites the Quran, intends to perform Hajj, the one praying, giving charity, teaching, reminding, and anyone who seeks nearness through the requisite actions—if you aim in seeking knowledge is to compete, show off, outdo your peers, garner attention, and mass the debris of this world, then you are on the path to demolish your religion, ruin yourself, and are selling your eternal life away for this world.

Your transaction is empty, your business profitless. And the person who teaches you in this case is nothing less than an accomplice in your transgression, a partner in your loss. He can be compared to one who sells a sword to a highway robber. Whoever helps with a sin by even half a word is a partner in it. But if, in seeking knowledge, your intention and aim, between Allah ﷻ and yourself, is to gain guidance, and not simply the transmission of information, then glad tidings be to you. The angels will spread their wings for you as you walk, and the fish in the sea will ask forgiveness for you as you strive.

Outward and Inward Taqwā

If you then ask, “What is the beginning of guidance, that I may test myself thereby?” know that its beginning is the outward form of *taqwā*, and its end is the inward reality of *taqwā*. Hence, there is no ultimate bliss except through *taqwā*, and guidance does not come but to those who are conscious of Allah.

Taqwā means carrying out the commands of Allah ﷻ and turning away from that which He has forbidden you. Its inward reality is only reached after establishing its outward form.

¹ This translation is taken from *The Beginning of Guidance* translated by Mashhad al-Allaf and published by White Thread Press.

If you find your heart inclining toward it, and you find your soul compliant and receptive, then look to the ends of it, and immerse yourself in the oceans of this knowledge.

If, on the other hand, you find that in taking stock of it, your heart puts off starting it, or asks for more time in responding to its demands, then know that the part of your lower self wanting knowledge is the self that commands to evil, which has risen up out of obedience to the accursed Satan. Satan's strategy is to throw to you the rope of deceit, then pull you in by it.

Taken together, these elements fully encompass the servant's interactions with the Creator and His creation. If you see it relevant to you, and you find your heart inclining toward it and desiring to act upon it, then know that you are a servant whose heart Allah has illuminated with true faith and expanded to accept it.

And be absolutely certain that this beginning has an end, and beyond it are spiritual secrets, depths of understanding, types of knowledge, and unveilings.

If, on the other hand, you find that your lower self considers these tasks too burdensome, and regards this kind of knowledge as too much trouble, know then, that Satan has misguided you and caused you to forget your destiny.

Higher Levels of Success

Know that the commandments of Allah ﷻ pertain to the obligatory and voluntary. The obligatory acts constitute the capital, by which salvation is attained. The voluntary acts are the profit, by which are reached the high levels of success.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*Allah ﷻ says, 'Those who draw near to Me do not draw near to Me with anything better than the acts I have made obligatory upon them. And a servant continues to draw nearer to Me by voluntary acts of worship until I love him...'*"

And you, dear seeker, will not be able to rise to carry out the commands of Allah ﷻ until you monitor your heart and limbs in your every moment and every breath, every movement and every moment of stillness, and organize your time and schedule your devotions from the time you wake up until the time you sleep.

Know that Allah ﷻ is closely observing your innermost heart; He beholds your inner and outer being. Make your greatest effort that He does not find you present where He has forbidden you, nor find you absent from where He has commanded you to be.

How to Spend Your Time

Whatever time you have left after it—i.e., after obligatory acts and emphasized Sunna Prayers—you should spend in one of four ways:

1. **Seeking beneficial knowledge:** the first way, and the best, is to spend your seeking beneficial knowledge in religion. Beneficial knowledge is only that which increases your fear of Allah u, increases your insight into your own defects, and increases your knowledge of how to worship your Lord. It reduces your yearning for this world, increases your yearning for the Hereafter, and opens your inner sight to the things that spoil your worship, so you may guard against them. It lays bare to you the scheming of Satan and his deceit. We have compiled the details of this category of beneficial knowledge in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. If you are of those worthy of it, go seek it and act by it, then teach it and invite others to it.

2. **Worship:** If you are unable to acquire beneficial knowledge, but spend your time engaged in the duties of worship, such as remembrance of Allah, recitation of the Quran, glorification, and extra Prayers, this is among the stations of the worshippers and the ways of the righteous, and by this method you will also be of the successful ones.

3. **Good works:** To spend your time working in something that will bring benefit to Muslims, and by which you will bring happiness to the hearts of the believers, or by which you make it easier for the righteous to accomplish good works. For example, serving the jurists, the true Sufis, and the people of religion, taking care of their errands, and striving to bring food to the poor and needy, making a habit of visiting the sick, and accompanying funeral processions. All these are superior to voluntary acts, because they are forms of worship and they involve kindness to Muslims.

4. **Earning a living and protecting your religion:** This is when you lack the strength for the aforementioned and you occupy yourself with your own needs, earning a living to take care of yourself and your family. Meanwhile, the Muslims are safe from your tongue and your hand, and your religion is safe. This is lowest of the levels of religion, for below it are the grazing grounds of devils, which would case you to engage in—may Allah protect us—that which ruins your religion or causes you to hurt one of Allah’s servants. This is the level of those who are destroyed, so beware of being at this level.

Levels of Religion

Know that a servant is at one of three levels in terms of his religion:

The safe one: this is the one who suffices with doing the basic obligatory acts and does not commit sins.

The one who profits: this is one who voluntarily performs good deeds and voluntary acts.

The loser: this is one who falls short in his performance of the obligatory acts.

Therefore, if you cannot be one of the profitable ones, then at least put your effort to among the safe, and beware, beware of being among the losers.

In terms of his relationship with his fellows, a servant is at one of three levels:

1. That he treats them as the reverent and noble angels do. This is by striving to help with their needs out of kindness to them, and by bringing happiness to their hearts.
2. That he be with them as an animal or an inanimate object would be: he may not bring them good, but he does not do them harm either.
3. That he be with them as a scorpion, serpent, or predatory animal: no one hopes for good from him and evil is feared of him.

Therefore, if you cannot reach the horizon of the angels, then beware of falling below the level of animals and inanimate objects down to the level of scorpions and snakes. If you are content with yourself to come down from the highest of levels, do not accept for yourself to be hurled down to the lowest of the low. For hopefully, you will be saved by doing just enough, neither achieving much nor losing all.

Therefore, by the light of your day, you should occupy yourself only with what benefits you in your afterlife.

If you cannot manage to fulfill the rights of your religion while associating with people, and you cannot remain safe, then solitude is better for you. You should adopt solitude, for in it is safety.

Structuring Your Time

Your time should not be without any structure, such that you occupy yourself arbitrarily with whatever comes along. Rather, you must take account of yourself, and organize your worship during the day and the night, assigning to each period of time an activity that must not

be neglected nor replaced by another activity. By this ordering of time, the blessing in time will show itself.

A person who leaves himself without a plan, as animals do, not knowing what he is to do at any given moment, will spend most of his time fruitlessly.

Your time is your life, and your life is your capital: by it you make your trade, and by it you will reach the eternal bounties in the proximity of Allah ﷻ. Every single breath of yours is a priceless jewel because it is irreplaceable. Once it is gone, there is no return for it.

So do not be like fools who rejoice each day as their wealth increases while their lives decrease. What good is there in wealth that increases while one's lifespan decreases?

Do not rejoice except in an increase of knowledge or an increase of good works. They are your two friends who will accompany you in your grave, when your spouse, your wealth, your children, and your friends will stay behind.

Taking Advantage of Time

Know that sleep is like death, and waking is like resurrection. Understand that the night and day comprise of twenty-four hours, so do not let the total amount of your sleep for the day and night exceed eight hours. It is quite enough for you, if you live sixty years, that you waste twenty of them, which is one-third. Unless being awake is a burden for you, in which case your being asleep is safer for your religion. It has come in narration, "A time will come when the best of what people find in their book of deeds is silence and sleep."

Imam al-Ghazālī ؒ says, after giving you the routines related to waking up from sleep:

When you awake, return to the routine of the morning I described first, and maintain this routine for the rest of your life. If keeping to this routine becomes difficult for you, be patient, as a sick person is patient with the bitterness of medicine, waiting for a return to health. Reflect on the shortness of your life. Even if you were to live one-hundred years, in comparison with your stay in the afterlife, which is everlasting eternity, it is a very short time.

Contemplate how it is that you bear hardship and humility in pursuit of this world for a month or a year, in order to gain rest and relaxation for, say, twenty years. How then is it that you cannot bear a few short days of this routine of worship to attain rest and relaxation for eternity!

Do not lengthen your hopes so that your work and deeds become burdensome to you. Anticipate the closeness of death, for death does not attack at a particular time, at a particular

age, or in a particular situation, though its assault is inevitable. Preparation for it is superior to preparation for this worldly life. Perhaps all that remains of your life is one breath, or one day. Therefore, make yourself be patient with obedience to Allah ﷻ. If you do as advised, you will have bliss at the time of death, an endless bliss. But if you procrastinate and take it easy, death will come to you at a time you do not expect it, and you will be grieved with a grief that knows no end. When morning comes, the travelers praise night travel. And at death the convincing truth will come to you. **“And you shall certainly know the truth of it after a short while.”** [Quran 38:88]

Presence of Heart

Make your heart present and empty yourself of whisperings. Consider before whom you are standing and upon whom you are calling; you should be ashamed to enter into intimate discourse with your Master with a heart that is heedless and is full of thoughts of this world and the filth of lowly desires.

Know that Allah is observing your inner self and beholding your heart. Truly Allah accepts your prayer based only on the degree of your awe, humility, surrender, and submissive entreaty. Worship Him in your prayer as though you see Him, or [knowing] that even though you do not see Him, He sees you. You only receive reward for your Prayer due to what you were conscious. Those parts when you were neglectful deserve seeking Allah’s forgiveness and expiation.

Refraining from Sin

Know that this religion is made up of two parts: performing acts of obedience and one of them is refraining from disobedience, which is more serious.

Everyone has the capacity to carry out acts of obedience, but only the truly sincere can abandon their appetites and desires. Thus did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, “The [true] migrant is the one who abandons evil, and the [true] warrior is the one who fights his passions.”

Know that you disobey Allah with your limbs, while they are a bounty from Allah and a trust to you. So your using the bounties of Allah ﷻ to disobey Him is the ultimate ingratitude, and your betraying the trust He has placed with you is the ultimate tyranny. The parts of your

body are your subjects, so pay attention to how you govern them. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you are responsible for your flock.

Know that all your limbs will testify against you in the plains of Judgment with clear, eloquent speech, as Allah will expose your faults in front of an assembly of creation. Allah ﷻ says, **“On that Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will testify against them as to what they used to do.”** [Quran 24:24] And Allah ﷻ says, **“On this Day We will seal their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify as to what they have earned.”** [Quran 36:65]

Therefore, poor servant, guard your entire body from sin, especially its seven limbs. Hell has seven gates, through each of which a particular group is destined to enter.

The only ones designated to enter these gates are those who disobeyed Allah ﷻ by means of these parts, which are the eye, the ear, the tongue, the stomach, the private part, the hand, and the foot.

Guarding the Eyes

As for the eye, it was created for you only so that you might be guided by it in the darkness; that you might be helped by it with respect to your needs; that by it you might see the wonders in the dominions of the heavens and earth and consider the signs they contain.

So protect your eye from four things: (1) from looking at a marriageable person [of the opposite gender]; (2) from looking at a beautiful form in a lustful way; (3) from looking at a Muslim with disdain; and (4) from being on the lookout for another Muslim’s faults.

Guarding the Ears

As for the ear, protect it from listening to reprehensible innovations, back biting, lewd talk, delving into falsehood, or talking about the faults of others. For verily the ear was created for you only to listen to the speech of Allah ﷻ; to the Sunna of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; to the wisdom of the *Awliyā* of Allah; and so that by it you might gain access to the benefits of knowledge, by which you may reach the eternal dominion and everlasting bounty.

So if you use it to listen to something disliked, then what was in your favor will be against you, and what was meant to be a reason for your success will become a reason for your destruction. This is the ultimate loss.

Also, do not think that the sin will be attributed only to the one who speaks it, and not to the one who listens; for verily it is said in a narration, “Truly the listener shares [in sin] with the speaker, and he is one of the two backbiters.”

Controlling the Tongue

As for the tongue, it was created for you only so that you could spend much time in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ and in recitation of His Mighty Book, you could guide Allah’s creatures to His Way, and that you express your needs in worldly and religious matters.

If you then use it for other than what it was created for, you have been ungrateful for Allah’s blessing. The tongue is the part of the body most able to overpower both you and other creatures. *“People are not thrown into Hell on their faces for anything more than the harvests of their tongues.”* [Tirmidhi] So struggle to gain victory over your tongue with all your might, lest it throw you onto your face in a pit of Hell. For it has been narrated in a hadith, *“A man might utter a single word, and for this one word he is hurled to the depths of Hell a distance of seventy years.”* [Tirmidhi]

Guard your tongue from lying both in seriousness and jest. Lying is one of the principal major sins. Beware of promising something and then not keeping your promise. Likewise, guard your tongue from backbiting, for *“backbiting is a sin more severe for a Muslim than thirty-three acts of adultery”* as has come in narration.

The meaning of backbiting is that you make mention of someone in a way that he would dislike if he were to hear it, even if what you say is true.

There is a matter which would stop you from backbiting against Muslims, were you to ponder it. Turn to yourself and consider, is there no flaw in you, apparent or hidden? If you know this to be so about yourself, know also that the other person’s inability to free himself from what you have ascribed to him is the same as your own, and his excuse is the same as yours. If you conceal his faults, Allah will conceal yours. However, if you expose him, Allah will expose you.

If you have looked at the outward and inward aspects of yourself and not found any flaw or deficiency, then know that your ignorance of your own flaws is the vilest type of stupidity. If Allah wills good for you, He gives you the ability to see your faults.

Guard your tongue from disputation, argumentation, and competitive debates with people, for these harm the one being addressed and make him feel ignorant. It also is a way to praise oneself through superiority in both intelligence and knowledge. Allah ﷻ says, “**So do not assert your own goodness. He knows best who is truly righteous.**” [Quran 53:32]

Take care never to curse anything that Allah has created, nor to swear that one of the people of the *qibla* is guilty of associating partners with Allah, or of disbelief, or of hypocrisy. Indeed, the only one who sees the secrets of the hearts is Allah ﷻ.

Never supplicate against any of the creatures of Allah, even if he has wronged you. Consign the matter to Allah. As the hadith says, “*Verily, the oppressed one prays against his oppressor until he takes his right, then continues to the point where the oppressor has a claim over him, which he will demand on the Day of Judgment.*”

A person once spoke out at length against Hajjaj. One of the pious predecessors said to him, “Allah will take vengeance for Hajjaj against those who attacked him verbally, just as He will take vengeance against Hajjaj for those whom he has oppressed.”

Guard your tongue from jesting, ridiculing, and making fun of people, for they make you lose face, diminish people’s respect for you, cause people to have an aversion from you, and damage hearts. They are a source of obstinate disputation and falling out with one another, and they sow hatred in the hearts.

These comprise the calamities of the tongue. Nothing will help you against them except solitude or forcing yourself to be silent, only speaking when necessary. Abū Bakr al-Şiddīq رضي الله عنه used to put a stone in his mouth, which would prevent him from speaking except when necessary. So be on guard against your tongue to your utmost ability, for it is the greatest means of your destruction in this world and the next.

Guarding the Stomach

As for the stomach, protect it from eating the forbidden and strive to seek out the lawful. Once you have obtained what is lawful, try not to eat to satiety, for indeed satiety hardens the heart, ruins the intellect, hinders one’s ability to memorize, makes one indolent in worship and seeking knowledge, strengthens one’s carnal appetites, and gives assistance to the soldiers of

Satan. So if satiety from the lawful is the source of every vice, what then of satiety from that which is unlawful?

Seeking out the lawful is obligatory on every Muslim. Engaging in worship and seeking knowledge with unlawful nourishment is like building on a garbage heap. If you are content with only one rough shirt for the whole year, and just two coarse loaves of flat bread a day, while giving up the pleasure of enjoying the best of condiments and seasonings, then you will not be short of what is lawful, in an amount that will suffice you, since what is lawful is plentiful.

It is not your responsibility to attain certainty about obscure matters [with regard to lawfulness], but you are obliged to guard against what you know to be unlawful, or what you reasonably suspect to be, based on a clear indication.

We have mentioned sources of doubtful, lawful, and unlawful income in one of the books of the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, which you should consult; for indeed, knowledge of lawful sources [of income] and seeking them out are obligatory on every Muslim, just as praying the five prayers is.

Protecting the Privates

As for the private part, guard it from everything that Allah ﷻ has forbidden, and be like Allah ﷻ mentioned, **“And those who guard their private parts except with their wives or those bondwomen in their possession, for then they are free from blame.”** [Quran 23:5-6]

And you will not be successful in guarding the private part except by guarding the eye from looking, the heart from contemplating, and the stomach from doubtful food and from satiety, for these things stir one’s desires and are the places where their seeds are sown.

Restraining the Hands

As for the hands, do not use them to strike a Muslim, to receive unlawful wealth, to harm anyone, or to betray a trust. Do not use them [even] to write something that is unlawful to say, for indeed the pen is one of the two tongues.

Guarding the Feet

As for the feet, do not use them to walk toward what is unlawful, nor to approach the door of an oppressive ruler. Going to oppressive rulers without necessity or compulsion is a transgression, for it is a form of honoring them, while Allah has commanded us to stay away from them. It also serves to increase their rank. If it is done to seek wealth from them, then it is to aspire to something that is forbidden.

In short, the movement and stillness of your limbs are bounties that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon you. Do not use these limbs to make the slightest move in disobedience to Him. Rather, you should use them in His obedience.

Reaping What You Sow

Know that if you fall short in this task, you will bear the penalty, whereas if you roll up your sleeves and work hard, you will taste the fruit of your efforts. Indeed, Allah has no need of you or your deeds. Rather, every person will reap what he sowed.

Take care not to say, “Allah ﷻ is All-Generous, Ever-Merciful, and He forgives the sins of transgressors,” for this is a truthful statement used wrongly. The one who does so is to be branded a fool, according to the criteria of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said, *“The intelligent one is he who takes account of himself, and works for what comes after death, and the foolish one is he who follows the inclinations of his self, while entertaining false hopes in Allah.”* [Tirmidhī]

Their description of Allah’s generosity and mercy may be true and correct, though Allah ﷻ has also said, **“Each person will have only what he strives for.”** [Quran 53:39] And He ﷻ said, **“You are only rewarded for what you used to do.”** [Quran 52:16]

It is from Allah’s generosity that He facilitates for you your path to reach the everlasting dominion by giving you the patience to abandon your lower desires for a few days. This is the epitome of generosity. So do not talk yourself into believing the clamor of those who are idle; rather, follow people of the highest commitment and intelligence: the Prophets and the righteous. Do not seek to reap that which you have not sown. It is greatly to be hoped that whoever has fasted, prayed, truly struggled, and had consciousness of Allah, will be forgiven.

Rectifying the Heart

This, then, is a summary of things from which you must protect your outward limbs. The actions of these outer limbs are the result only of the qualities of the heart. So if you wish to protect your outward limbs, you must purify your heart, for that is the inner aspect of consciousness of Allah.

The heart is that morsel of the body which, if sound, the rest of the body by it is sound and whole, and, if corrupt, the rest of the body by it is corrupt. So engage in rectifying it, so that you may rectify all your limbs and faculties.

Know that the blameworthy qualities of the heart are many, that the path to purify the heart from its vices is lengthy, and that the way to heal them is difficult to comprehend. The knowledge and practice of the heart's treatment have completely disappeared because of people's neglect of their own souls, and because of their distraction with the adornments of the world.

We have dealt fully with all this in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, but it is sufficient here to warn you of three of the evil dispositions of the heart that are destructive in themselves and constitute the roots of all other evil dispositions. They are envy, ostentation, and conceit.

Strive your utmost to purify your heart of these vices. If you conquer these, learn how to guard against the others. But if you are unable to deal with these three evil dispositions, you will find yourself even less able to deal with the others.

Do not imagine that you will be able to maintain a sound intention in your pursuit of sacred knowledge while there exists any envy, ostentation, or conceit in your heart. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “*There are three destructive vices: obeying an impulse to be stingy, following passion, and admiring oneself.*” [Ṭabarānī]

Envy (*Ḥasad*)

The envious person is one who is pained when Allah ﷻ, from the treasures of His omnipotent power, bestows on one of His servants wealth or knowledge or love in the hearts of people, or any kind of good fortune. He is pained to the point where he wishes that Allah's favor would be taken away from that person, even if the same favor would not transfer to him as a result. This is really the pinnacle of wickedness, and about which the Prophet ﷺ said, “*Envy devours good deeds just as fire devours wood.*” [Abū Dawūd]

The envious person himself is one who suffers punishment and receives no mercy. He is in continuous torment, for there will never be a lack of those, among his contemporaries and acquaintances, on whom Allah has bestowed knowledge or wealth or esteem. The punishment of the world to come is even greater and more severe. In fact, a servant does not arrive at true faith until he loves for his brother, and for the rest of the Muslims, what he loves for himself. Indeed, he must participate with them in times of ease and times of difficulty.

Muslims are like a single building; one part strengthens the other. They are like a single body; if one limb suffers, the rest of the body suffers as well.

If you do not find that this is the case with your heart, it is more important for you to occupy yourself with seeking deliverance from destruction than with obscure branches of juristic knowledge and case law.

Ostentation (*Rīyā'*)

Ostentation is a hidden form of ascribing partners to Allah. It is to seek a place in the hearts of people by which you may attain fame and veneration. Love of fame comes from the ruinous pursuit of one's inclinations. It is this that destroys most people, for nothing destroys people except people themselves.

If the majority of people were fair and objective, they would realize that most of their activities—in seeking sacred knowledge and in worship, not to mention customary activities—are only undertaken out of regard for other people. This motive renders their acts of no worth. Thus do we find in a narration, *“On the Day of Resurrection, it will be decreed that a martyr be taken to the Fire. He will say, ‘O Lord, but I was martyred fighting in Your path?’ Allah Most High will proclaim, ‘You wanted it to be said that you were brave. It was said, so that is your reward.’”* [Muslim]

The same will happen with the scholar, the Hajj pilgrim, and the reciter of the Quran who were ostentatious.

Arrogance (*Kibr*)

☞ Other Diseases of the Heart

Other diseases of the heart are self-admiration, arrogance, and pride, which is a deep-seated disease. It is when the servant looks at himself with the eye of honor and self-glorification, while looking at others with the eye of lowliness and disdain.

The arrogant person is one who, when warned, haughtily rejects the advice, yet, when warning others, does so aggressively. Anyone who sees himself as better than one of Allah's creatures is arrogant. Rather than being arrogant, you should realize that the virtuous one is the one considered virtuous by Allah in the Final Abode, and that is something that is unseen and depends upon one's state at death.

Your conviction, therefore, that you are better than others is pure ignorance. Rather, you should not look at any other person without seeing that he is better than you, that his merit surpasses yours, and yourself as nothing.

If you see a child, you should say to yourself, "This child has not transgressed against Allah, and I have, so certainly he is better than me."

If you see an older person, say, "This person is better than me; he has been worshipping Allah longer than I have."

If you see a knowledgeable person, say, "This person has been given what I have not been given, and has reached [in rank] what I have not reached; and he knows what I am ignorant of—so how could I be like him?"

If you see an ignorant person, say, "This person has transgressed against Allah ﷻ in ignorance, while I have done so knowingly, so Allah's evidence against me is greater."

And if you see an unbeliever, say, "I don't know how my life will end and how his life will end."

Fearing a bad end should preoccupy you and keep you from being arrogant toward Allah's servants. The fact that you currently have faith does not lessen the possibility of change in the future. For indeed, Allah is the changer of hearts; He guides whom He wills and leaves to stray whom He wills.

So you must consider whether your main priority is to learn how to guard yourself against these destructive vices, occupying yourself with rectifying your heart and building your afterlife, or to take part in foolish conversation with those who like to do so, and seek the type

of knowledge that will increase you in arrogance, ostentation, envy, and conceit, until you, along with the others, are destroyed.

Know that these three characteristics are among the major diseases of the heart, and they have but one seedbed: love for this world. For that reason, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Love of this world is the cause of every sin.” [*Shu‘ab al-Imān*]

At the same time, this world is the field we may cultivate for the afterlife. So whoever takes of this world only as much as he needs to help him toward his afterlife, it is his cultivated field. But for whoever desires this world only to live in ease and comfort, it will be his ruin.

This, then, represents a small portion of the outward understanding of consciousness of Allah. So if you have tested your lower self regarding it, and your lower self has complied, then continue on to *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* to learn the method for attaining the inner aspect of consciousness of Allah.

When the innermost aspect of your heart becomes infused with the consciousness of Allah, it is then that the veils between you and your Lord will be lifted, the lights of gnosis will be revealed to you, the springs of wisdom will burst forth from your heart, and the secrets of the heavenly and earthly dominions will be made clear to you.

This is a summary of the guidance you need to reach the beginning of the path in your interaction with Allah ﷻ by carrying out His commands and avoiding what He has prohibited.

The Highest Companion

Know that your Companion, the one who never parts from you—whether you are at home or you are travelling, whether you are asleep or awake, and indeed, in your life and at your death—is none other than your Lord, your Protector, your Master and your Creator. Whenever you engage in remembrance of Him, He is with you, as Allah ﷻ says, **“I am the Companion of the one who engages in remembrance of Me.”** [al-Bayhaqī] And He ﷻ said, **“I am with those whose hearts are broken for My sake.”** [*Hilyat al-Awliyā*]

If you knew Him truly as He should be known, you would take Him as your Companion and leave people aside. If you are not able to do this all the time, then beware of leaving your entire night and day devoid of a time spent alone with your Master, therein to taste the sweetness of intimate dialogue with Him.

The manners of this company are: keeping the eyes downcast, full concentration, remaining silent, stillness of the limbs, hastening to fulfill His command, avoiding prohibited

things, minimal objection to what He decrees for you, constant remembrance of Him, persevering in reflection, giving preference to the truth, despairing of created beings, humility before Allah's Majesty, a feeling of brokenness coupled with modesty, peace of mind in not resorting to any strategy for earning a livelihood by having confidence in Allah's guarantee, and complete trust in the grace of Allah ﷻ knowing with certainty that the best choice will always be the one He makes.

These etiquettes, all of them, should constitute your distinguishing emblem, in all your nights and days. They are the spiritual courtesies of companionship with a Friend who never leaves your side, even as every one of creation will part company with you at one time or another.

Etiquettes of the Scholar

If you are a scholar, then the manners of a scholar are: ample tolerance, keeping to forbearance, gravity and a dignified bearing when in the company of people, refraining from showing haughtiness toward any of creation, preferring a lowly status in gatherings and meetings, avoidance of jest and games, gentleness with the student, showing poise with a presumptuous questioner who is haughty, correcting the dull-witted with excellent guidance and not becoming annoyed with him, not to be too proud to say "I don't know," devoting your full attention to the questioner and genuinely attempting to understand his question, fully accepting another's proof in a debate, submitting to the truth and returning to it when you realize you are wrong, preventing the student from learning any branch of knowledge that will harm him, deterring the student from desiring in his pursuit of useful knowledge anything other than the Countenance of Allah ﷻ, and preventing the student from occupying himself with the communal obligations before he has completed his individual obligations. His primary individual obligation is to rectify his outward and inward, with consciousness of Allah, taking account of himself first, so that the student may follow him in actions first and benefit from his words second.

Etiquettes of the Student

If you are a student, then the manners of a student with the teacher are: to be the first to greet and offer the salutation of peace, not to speak too much in his presence, not to speak unless asked something by the teacher, not to ask questions without first seeking permission, not to say in contradiction to what he has said, “But such-and-such scholar says something different from what you say,” not to point out something contrary to his opinion and think himself more learned than the teacher.

A student should not whisper to another student in his gathering, not look around, but rather sit with good manners, eyes downcast, as though in ritual prayer. He should not burden his teacher with questions when he is tired or weary, stand when he stands out of respect, not follow him from the gathering and talk to him and ask him questions.

A student should not ask his teachers questions when he is on the way to his home until he reaches there and grants permission, and he should not form a bad opinion of him regarding actions that appear, outwardly, to be blameworthy, for he knows better about his own personal affairs.

Etiquettes with Parents

If you have parents who are still alive, then the manners of the child with the parents are: to listen to what they say, to stand up for them when they stand, to do what they tell you to, not to walk ahead of them, not to raise your voice over theirs, to answer them when they call you, to be intent upon seeking their good pleasure, to lower to them the wing of humility, to not remind them of your goodness toward them, nor of the fact that you are taking care of their affairs for them, not to frown in their faces, and not to travel except with their consent.

Other Relationships

Know that after the categories above, the rest of people who have relations with you fall into three categories: acquaintances, friends, and strangers.

When you are tested with strangers from the general public, the etiquette of sitting with them entails: avoiding getting involved in their conversations or discussions, not paying too

much attention to their disquieting talk, being wary of meeting with them too often or getting into a position where you are in need of them, and calling their attention to their blameworthy actions with gentleness and sincerity when there is hope that they will accept what you say.

Friendship & Brotherhood

With regard to brothers and friends, you must do two things:

The first is to check for the presence of the requisite qualities of companionship and friendship. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “*A person’s religion is like that of his friend, so let each one of you consider well whom he befriends.*” [Tirmidhī]

Only take someone as a brother if he has these five qualities:

1. **Intellect:** There is no good in friendship with a foolish person, for such friendship will only end in estrangement and breaking of relations. This person may even harm you while intending to bring you benefit. An intelligent enemy is better than a foolish friend. The Commander of Believer, our master ‘Alī ؑ said:

Do not befriend an ignorant person,

let both you and him beware!

For how many an ignoramus has brought to ruin

a gentle forbearing man when he befriended him

A person is measured by the company he keeps,

Like one pair of shoes placed next to another

Everything is evaluated by comparison to its peer;

A heart will reflect the reality of the heart it keeps company with

2. **Good Character:** Do not be friends with a person of bad character. This is someone who cannot restrain his anger or control his desire.

3. **Uprightness:** Do not befriend a wrongdoer who persists in committing a major transgression, because you cannot be safe from someone who does not fear Allah ﷻ. Indeed, such a person changes as his objectives change. Allah ﷻ said, “**Do not obey those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follow ‘only’ their desires.**” [Quran 18:28]

Seeing wrongdoers and their transgressions on a regular basis will remove from your heart a hatred for sin. This is why backbiting is taken lightly, because people have become accustomed to it.

4. **Absence of Greed:** Do not befriend a person who has greed for the world. Friendship with someone who is greedy for this world is a lethal poison, for a person's nature imitates the other without a person even feeling it. Keeping company with one who is fervently attached to this world increases your own greed for it, while being with someone who has renounced this world will encourage your own renunciation of it.

5. **Honesty:** Do not befriend a liar, for you will always face deception from him. He is like a mirage, making what is far seem near to you and what is near seem far. You may not even find all these five qualities existing together in those who are residents in the religious schools and mosques. Therefore, keep to isolation and solitude, except when necessary, for in it you will find peace and safety.

The Three Types of People

There are three kinds of people. The first group is like nourishment: one cannot exist without it.

The second is like medicine: one needs it from time to time.

The third is like an illness: it is never needed at all, yet the servant may be afflicted by it. Such people provide neither benefit nor agreeable company. One must simply be diplomatic with them until one is relieved of them. Nevertheless, observing such a person may bring great benefit if Allah gives you the ability to see it. You see in his vices and low states what you find repugnant, and so you avoid these states. Indeed, the felicitous one is he who takes a warning from others.

Etiquettes of Companionship

Companionship has rights and etiquettes. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, *“No one spends time in the company of a friend, even for short time in the day, without being questioned later about his companionship and whether he fulfilled the right of Allah ﷻ in it or did he neglect it.”*

And, *“No two friends share each other’s company, except that the kinder and more caring of the two toward the other is more beloved to Allah.”*

The etiquettes of friendship are: to give your friend preference in your wealth, or, if you cannot do this, to give freely out of your surplus wealth when he is in need.

It is to provide swift assistance when he is in need, in person and without his having to request it; to keep his secrets; to conceal his faults; not to pass on people’s criticism of him that would upset him; not to pass on people’s praise of him that would please him; to pay full attention when he speaks; to thank him for the favors he does for you; and to defend him in his absence from all infringements upon his honor as you would defend yourself; to give him advice with gentleness and by subtle hints if he needs it; to pardon his slips and errors; to pray for him during his life and after his death; to remain loyal to his family and relatives after his death; to choose to make things easy for him by not burdening him with any of your own needs, so as to keep his heart free from your concerns; to express joy at all the happy occasions in his life and sadness at all calamities that afflict him; and to be in your innermost heart just as you appear outwardly.

In short, you should treat your friend exactly as you would like to be treated. For truly, the brotherhood of a person who does not love for his brother what he loves for himself is mere hypocrisy and will have evil consequences for him both in this world and the Hereafter.

Etiquettes with Acquaintances

If you have to socialize with acquaintances at school, the central mosque, the local mosque, in the city, or in the market, you must not belittle any of them, for, you do not know, they may be better than you. At the same time, you must not look at them with an eye of reverence because of their position in the world, as this could ruin you.

You must take care not to offer them your religion in order to attain what they have of this world. No one ever does so without being diminished in their eyes and, moreover, ending up deprived of what they have.

If they show you hostility, do not reciprocate with hostility, for you will never have the patience to fully requite them. You will end up losing your religion and your difficulties with them will be long and drawn out.

Do not find comfort with them when they honor you and be wary of them when they praise you to your face or show affection for you. If you were to look into the reality of the

situation, you would find that only one in a hundred of them is sincere. Do not expect them to treat you the same way in private as they do in public. Do not be surprised if they slander you in your absence. Do not get angry with them, because if you are fair and honest, you will find that you act the same way, even with your friends and relatives; indeed, even with your teachers and your parents. For you mention about them in their absence what you do not say to their faces.

Do not covet their money or status or hope for their support. The covetous person, in most cases, fails in the end to get what he wanted, and in the present is most certainly humiliated.

If you ask one of your acquaintances to do something for you, and he does it, thank Allah ﷻ, then thank the person. If he does not manage to do it, do not rebuke him nor complain about it lest enmity develop. Rather, be like the believer, seeking out excuses for his brother, and not like the hypocrite, who searches for faults.

Do not admonish any of them unless you first see in him a willingness to accept it, lest he refuse to hear it from you and turn against you, except in the case when they are committing an act of disobedience that they must immediately abandon. In this case, you should remind them of the truth gently, without being harsh. Heed whatever truth they say, be deaf to their falsehood, speak about their good qualities and remain silent about their shortcomings. Be as Hilāl ibn al-‘Alā al-Raqqī said,

When I forgave all and harbored no rancor toward any,
I relieved myself of the worry of enmity
Indeed, I give good greetings to my enemy upon seeing him,
So as to repel evil with salutations,
I display joy in meeting one I despise,
As if he has filled my heart with happiness
I am not even safe with those I do not know,
How then could I be safe with those who affect loving me?
People are an illness, and the cure is abandoning them
By harshness toward them, the bonds of brotherhood are cut
So make peace with people, and you will be safe from the troubles they cause,
And be avid to acquire chivalrous traits
Deal with people with good character, and be patient as long as you remain with them,
See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, and be cautious!

Comprehensive Manners

Be balanced in all of your affairs, for extremes on either side are blameworthy. One of the sages said: Meet your friend and your enemy with the same face, one of contentment, neither lowering yourself to them in humiliation, nor looking up to them in awe. Have a dignified bearing without arrogance, and show humility without abasement. Do not look at people from the corner of your eye nor constantly glance around from side to side. Do not stop and talk to every group you come across; and if you do sit down with them, do not sit in a restless manner.

Make sure you avoid clasping your fingers together, playing with your beard or ring, picking your teeth, picking your nose, a lot of spitting or clearing your throat, swatting flies away from your face, and too much stretching or yawning, whether in front of people, in the ritual prayer, or elsewhere.

Rather, let the way you sit be quiet and calm, and your speech orderly and well thought out. Pay proper attention to the good conversation of the one speaking to you, without showing exaggerated amazement, and do not ask him to repeat himself. Remain silent when people are joking and telling stories. Do not speak about how proud you are of your children, your poetry, your mode of expression, your literary work, or other matters personal to you.

Do not encourage anyone to commit oppression. Do not insist upon having your needs met. Do not inform your spouse or children, let alone anyone else, of the amount of your wealth. Be strict with them without being harsh; and be lenient with them without being weak. Do not joke around with your male or female servants or your dignity will be lost.

In arguments with others, guard against your own ignorance and rashness. Speak only when your anger has abated. If the ruler tries to befriend you and bring you close, be with him as you would the sharp edge of a spearhead. Beware of the fair-weather friend, for he is the worst of enemies. Do not allow your wealth to be more valuable to you than your honor.

This concludes what we have shared from *The Beginning of Guidance*.

The Fruit of Knowledge

Know that the fruit of knowledge is acting according to it. Whoever acts according to what he has learned, Allah bequeaths him with knowledge of what he does not know. The jurist ‘Umar Bā-Makhrama (may Allah ﷻ have mercy on him) said,

One person’s stream is overflowing, but his crops do not grow
Yet another, his crops sprout with the first rain

This has two meanings. One is that some people hear the entire recitation of the Quran time after time, complete one book after another, listen to multiple reminders, yet their crops do not grow. In other words, such a person is not impacted by any of these things in a way that makes him increase his good actions, act accordingly, or inspires him to repent and turn to Allah.

“Yet another, his crops sprout with the first rain.” This means that some people learn just a bit of knowledge and then engage in abundant actions. This is like the man who heard, **“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it,”** [Quran 99:7-8] then said, “This is enough for me.” Someone then said of him, “The man has understood.”

Or another man who heard the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, *“It is part of the excellence of a person’s Islam to leave that which does not concern him.”* After hearing this, he got up and said, “I will go put this into practice [before learning other things].”

In a particular town, the *khatīb* would repeat the same message over and over each Jumu‘a. They criticized him for it, so he responded by saying, “I will say something new once you put this lesson into practice.”

Someone said to Imam ‘Abd-Allah ibn al-Mubārak, “Is there anyone left who can counsel people?” to which he said, “Is there anyone left who accepts counsel?”

O Allah, Your forgiveness is greater than our sins and we have more hope in Your mercy than we do in our own actions. Glory and praise belong to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except You. I have committed sins and wronged my own self, so forgive me, for none can forgive sins save You.

“Glorified is your Lord—the Lord of Might—above what they claim! Peace be upon the Messengers. And all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.” [Quran 37:180-182]

This letter was completed on the first Day of Tashrīq at the end of 1256 H.