

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Chapter One

Starting Points of the Successful

The (rewards of) deeds depend upon the original intentions, so intend good and aim at benefiting others in every deed you do and restrain yourself from evil.

Do not feel discomforted when struck with afflictions, for they polish the hearts, sharpen the minds, and whet the resolutions.

Hard work is the greatest way to attain good fortune. It is the balm for your ailments, and the remedy for all your diseases. It is also your treasure.

A person's value lies in that which they can do well. The idle person is valueless, the unsuccessful person is hateful, and the ineffective person is of little significance.

Focus your attention on a single endeavor to which you devote yourself wholeheartedly, so that you can be creative.

Begin with the most important, then the less important, and avoid the dissipating your energy on many jobs, for that leads to confusion and incompetence.

Order is the path to success, and putting everything in its place is the quest of the successful, unlike chaos, which is blameworthy.

It is a characteristic of the successful to preserve their possessions, material and belongings: they neither squander nor damage what they have.

Perfume does not exude its scent until it is crushed, and incense is not fragrant until it is burnt; similarly, distress is a (source of) goodness and blessing for you.

The successful person is one who does not let their inclination overcome their reason, or their failure overcome their patience, nor are they lured by temptations, or preoccupied by trivial things.

Beware of tedium and boredom, for tedium hinders you from fulfilling rights, and an ever-bored person fails to observe sacred obligations. Instead, learn to be patient and firm.

Whoever keeps firm grows with steadfastness. The one who works hard (in their life) will find the fruit of their hard work; and the one who cultivates will inevitably reap the harvest of their cultivation; and the one who perseveres will surely win; and the one who has self-respect will excel.

The ant ascends a thousand times, the bee comes and goes time after time, and the wolf abandons pleasure in pursuit of food.

The sword cuts off when it comes down; lightning shines when it sparks; the pearl increases (in value) when it is found deeper down (at the bottom of the ocean or sea), and water benefits the people when it flows.

The lazy person is disappointed; the wandering person is unconscious; the jobless person is idle, and the one who is preoccupied with vain hopes is bankrupt (of deeds).

Whoever uses up his power from the beginning would have no power in the end; and whoever works hard in his youth would have the upper hand in his old age.

Remember that the Quran invites you to hasten (to good), race (towards favors), strive (to do our utmost in the cause of Allah The Almighty), endure (with patience), and remain steadfast (when facing your enemies); and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) invites you to be concerned with what benefits you, and to hasten to good deeds; and there are two blessings that are misused by many people: health and spare time.

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, the second of two persons (in the cave of *Thawr*), spent all his property (in the way of Allah The Almighty) and will be called (on the Day of Judgment) to enter Paradise from all of its eight gates. He was also the one who fought to suppress apostasy.

‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, was the one from whose shadow Satan himself used to flee, and the Divine Revelation concurred with his opinions more than once.

‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan, may Allah be pleased with him, equipped *Jaysh Al-‘Usrah* (the army of adversity or distress) from his own wealth, made the well of Roomah an endowment (for the advantage of all the Muslim inhabitants of Al-Madeenah), and used to recite the entire Noble Quran from the beginning to the end in one *Rak‘ah* (unit of prayer).

‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, engaged in duel in (the Battle of) Badr, conquered the fort of Khaybar and killed Marhab (the Jew), and slew ‘Amr ibn Wudd on the day of (the Battle of) Al-Khandaq.

Khaalid ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, took part in one hundred battles, and on the day of (the Battle of) Al-Yarmook, nine swords were broken in his hand.

Az-Zubayr ibn Al-‘Awwaam, may Allah be pleased with him, was wounded in every part of his body, and he carried the sword in defense of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, and he was duly proclaimed his (the Prophet’s) disciple in Paradise.

Talhah, may Allah be pleased with him, continued to receive strikes in his body (while holding himself as a shield in defense of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) until his arm was paralyzed. Hanthalah, may Allah be pleased with him, was killed while he was in the state of *Janaabah* (ritual impurity), and his dead body was washed by the angels; and the Throne of Allah shook for the death of Sa'd ibn Mu'aath, may Allah be pleased with him.

'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr ibn Haraam, may Allah be pleased with him, the father of Jaabir, may Allah be pleased with him, received more than eighty stabs (to death), and Allah The Almighty spoke to him, without an interpreter.

Ubayy ibn Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, memorized the whole Quran and recited it perfectly according to the rules of recitation, therefore Allah The Almighty mentioned him among the exalted assembly (of angels), and commanded His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, to recite to him *Soorat Al-Bayyinah*.

'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, gave in charity a caravan of one thousand camels with their load to the poor; and Abu Talhah, may Allah be pleased with him, gave his garden in charity in the way of Allah The Almighty.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, memorized (and preserved from wasting away) the greater part of the *Sunnah*, and divided his night into three: one third for prayer, another third for memorizing the *Hadeeths* (narrations), and the remaining third for sleep.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may Allah have mercy upon him, covered thirty thousand miles in quest for *Hadeeth*, and memorized one hundred thousand traditions, of which he composed the *Musnad*, which includes about forty thousand *Hadeeths*.

Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullaah, may Allah be pleased with him, set off on a month’s journey to Egypt in quest of only one *Hadeeth*; and Ibn Al-Musayyib, may Allah have mercy upon him, embarked on a three-day journey in search of the answer to only one question.

Ibn Hibbaan, may Allah have mercy upon him, narrated *Hadeeths* from two thousand *Shaykhs*, compiled his book of *As-Saheeh* which became phenomenally acclaimed, and was encyclopedic in all branches of knowledge, making him the brightest luminary of his time.

Al-Muzani, may Allah have mercy upon him, read Ash-Shaafi‘i’s *Ar-Risaalah* five hundred times; and a scholar from Al Andalus (present-day Spain) read *Saheeh Al-Bukhaari* seven hundred times.

Abu Is-haaq Ash-Sheeraazi, may Allah have mercy upon him, repeated each of his lessons one hundred times; and repeated each analogy one thousand times; and authored one hundred volumes.

Ibn ‘Aqeel, may Allah have mercy upon him, authored eight hundred volumes in different branches of knowledge, and preferred to eat dry – instead of well-baked – bread, to save time (the mealtime) for reciting fifty Quranic verses.

Ibn Taymiyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, wrote, in one day, four compilations, each of which needs one week to be copied. He used to write a complete book in one session; and more than one thousand books were written about him.

Ibn Jareer, may Allah have mercy upon him, wrote about one hundred thousand pages, and Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, authored about one

thousand compositions. Ibn Al-Anbaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, memorized about four hundred *Tafseers* (interpretations of the Quran).

‘Ataa’ ibn Abi Rabaah, may Allah have mercy upon him, continued spending the night in the mosque for thirty years in pursuit of knowledge; and for sixty years, Al-A‘mash, may Allah have mercy upon him, never missed an opening *Takbeer* (with the *Imaam* in congregational prayer).

According to An-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, Kurz ibn Wabarah, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to recite the Quran from the beginning to the end four times at night and four times during the day, and Ibn Idrees, may Allah have mercy upon him, finished the recitation of the entire Quran in his house four thousand times. Ash-Shaafi‘i, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to finish the recitation of the Quran completely sixty times every *Ramadhaan*; and so did Al-Bukhaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, thirty times. Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to perform three hundred *Rak‘ahs* daily.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to exalt (Allah) twelve thousand times per day; and Khaalid ibn Marwaan, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to exalt (Allah) one hundred thousand times per day.

We have heard of some people who used to recite *Soorat Al-Ikhlaas* one thousand times per day; and others who used to finish the recitation of the Noble Quran in full once per day; and those who used to exalt (Allah The Almighty) fifteen thousand times per day.

Seebawayh, may Allah have mercy upon him, authored the greatest composition in Arabic grammar when he was only thirty years old; and An-Nawawi, may Allah

have mercy upon him, died when he was forty years old, leaving an enormous legacy (of religious knowledge).

Tarafah ibn Al-‘Abd, one of the (seven or ten) poets of *Mu‘allaqaat* (long poems written in gold water and hung inside the *Ka‘bah* during the pre-Islamic days) was twenty-six years old when he was killed; and Muhammad ibn Al-Qaasim, may Allah have mercy upon him, led the armies when he was only seventeen years old.

Al-Hasan (ibn ‘Ali), may Allah be pleased with him, narrated *Hadeeth* from his grandfather, the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, when he was still five years old; and Mahmood ibn Ar-Rabee‘, may Allah be pleased with him, perceived the fact that the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, ejected a mouthful of water on his face when he was still five years old.

Ibn ‘Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them, memorized *Hadeeth* when he was eight years old; and Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, started to give *Fatwa* (religious verdicts) when he was eighteen years old.

Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy upon him, authored his *Fat-h Al-Baari* along with its introduction in thirty-two years; and Abu ‘Ubayd composed his *Kitaab Al-Ghareeb* in forty years; and Al-Asfahaani composed his *Kitaab Al-Aghaani* in fifty years.

When Ja‘far Al-Barmaki, the booming, generous minister, was killed, he was thirty-seven years old; and when ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd-Al-‘Azeed, may Allah have mercy upon him, the fifth rightly-guided abstinent caliph, was killed (according to some historians), he was forty years old; and when ‘Abdullaah ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ was killed, he was thirty-seven years old.

When Masrooq, may Allah have mercy upon him, performed *Hajj*, he only slept in the posture of prostration; and Al-Aswad ibn Yazeed, may Allah have mercy upon him, continued observing fasts until his body turned pale; and Yazeed ibn Haaron, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept weeping (out of fear of Allah The Almighty) until he lost his sight ; and Abu Moosa Al-Ash‘ari, may Allah be pleased with him, walked (in the cause of Allah The Almighty) until his feet cracked.

Al-Bukhaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, *“I have never told a lie since I attained the age of puberty.”* Ash-Shaafi‘i, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, *“I have never sworn by Allah, whether I was truthful or lying.”*

No thrifty person has ever become poor; and no striver has ever failed; and one who comprehends knowledge during their youth will gain sovereignty (when they grow old).

Your wealth is (as protective as) your paternal/maternal uncle; and your money is (as advantageous as) your molar teeth; and your *Dirhams* are (as comforting to you as) your ointment: so be neither a spendthrift nor a miser.

Indeed, stagnant water becomes rotten; the confined nightingale dies; and the tied up lion yields.

The most delicious food is that which one has after hunger; the sweetest water is that which one drinks after thirst; and the most comfortable sleep is that which one takes after tiredness; and the greatest success is in that which one achieves after sacrifice.

It is true that books dictate wisdom, but in no way can they produce wise men. Similarly, it is true that the sword kills, but only when in the hand of the brave.

Swimming cannot be learnt in books in so much as (through practice) in the water, nor can sport be gained from the (television) screen in so much as through exercise in the field.

The (benefits of this) world could be gained only by competing (with others); the market of glory is an arena of competition (among the people); life is but a struggle, and high aims are only achieved by people with strong determination.

The one who is unique among people is he who has an engaging endeavor, a hearty spirit, lively activity and enduring patience. It was said to Abu Muslim Al-Khuraasaani, *“What is the matter with you that you never sleep?”* He said, *“This goes back to my sweeping endeavor, incisive determination, and a soul that never accepts oppression.”*

The horse is fast, therefore, it is the vehicle of the kings; the donkey is slow, therefore it is the vehicle of the servants; and the lion is predatory, therefore it is the king of the forest.

The sword does not terrify until it is unsheathed, nor does thunder frighten until it claps, nor does one flee from the torrent until it breaks out.

Edison, the scientist who discovered electricity, conducted about ten thousand experiments on a battery, all of which failed. However, he continued until he succeeded in the end. Einstein spent a lifetime in the development of his theory of relativity.

At his death, an amount of shavings were taken from the pen sharpener of Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, and it was enough to warm up the water that was used to wash his dead body.

At his death, the dust (of war) was taken from the turbans of Salaah ud-Deen (Saladin), may Allah have mercy upon him, and (it was so much that) it was used to make a brick to put underneath his head in his grave.

‘Ali ibn Al-Husayn, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept carrying food for the orphans in secret until it left marks and sores on his body.

Allah the Almighty Says (what means):

- *{And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives and that his effort is going to be seen – Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense.} [Quran 53:39-41]*
- *{That is because they are not afflicted by thirst or fatigue or hunger in the Cause of Allah, nor do they tread on any ground that enrages the disbelievers, nor do they inflict upon an enemy any infliction but that it is registered for them as a righteous deed.} [Quran 9:120]*

The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, said: *“A wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from doing evil deeds) and does good deeds to benefit him after death; and the deficient person is the one who subdues himself to his inclinations and desires and expects from Allah the fulfillment of his vain desires.”* [Ibn Maajah and At-Tirmithi]

The most becoming arms are those of the laborers; and the best heads are of those who have their heads shaved; and the most comfortable slumber is that of men who

regularly offer *Tahajjud* prayer (at night); and the purest blood is that of the martyrs.

The one who overpowers himself is greater than the one who conquers a city; and the one who resists his inclination is more glorious than the one who fights an army alone.

Abu Talhah Al-Ansaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, continued to observe fasting for forty years consecutively; and Sa'eed ibn Al-Musayyib, may Allah have mercy upon him, performed *Hajj* sixty times; and Imaam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, gave *Fatwa* for sixty thousand questions with evidence.

Abu Shujaa' served kings for sixty years, for which he made expiation by a sixty-year service in the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, in Al-Madeenah.

Ibn Battootah traveled around the world for about thirty years, during which he saw many amazing things, and the outcome of this trip was his book in which he collected wonders and peculiarities, that drew the attention of the people of his time.

Ibn Khaldoon segregated himself in a castle and authored, edited and completed his history, which became a proof for all questioners.

Al-Haafith Ibn 'Asaakir wrote his *Taareekh Dimashq* (History of Damascus) in sixty years, in which he left neither a scholar, nor a writer, nor a poet, nor anything belonging to Damascus except that he recorded it.

It was the habit of Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, that whenever he confronted a difficult question, he would pray for forgiveness one thousand

times. On a journey, the disciples of Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi, may Allah have mercy upon him, asked him to relate tradition to them thereupon he said, “*Let us start with the Quran.*” He finished reciting it entirely before he related to them.

It was said to Abi Taahir As-Silafi, may Allah have mercy upon him, “*From where have you attained this knowledge?*” He said, “*From staying in my house with books for seventy years.*”

You are advised to adhere to regular walks, sports and cleanliness, for the successful are always strong and healthy. The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, said: “*Allah has blessed for my Ummah (nation) the early hours of the day.*” So, if you intend to do a deed, do it early in the morning, for it is the happiest time.

Do not stop (working), for the angels are writing, your lifetime is passing, and death is inevitably approaching, and every breath that comes out will never return. The fruits of procrastination are always (false) wishes and hopes; they taste of regret and grief.

When you awake in the morning, do not wait for the evening; rather, hasten to seize all passing opportunities, be cautious lest you should be overtaken (by death), and beware of postponement and hesitation: ***{And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah}*** [Quran 3:159]

Creativity is to be perfect in your specialty and to be competent in all that befits your talents, ***{and every people knew its watering place.}*** [Quran 2:60] ***{For each [religious following] is a direction toward which it faces.}*** [Quran 2:148]

The speech of the unsuccessful never harms the successful in so much as it contributes to their loftiness and elevation.

Unjust criticism is for the successful person but a (source of) strength, free publicity, respectable advertising, and good mention of his superiority.

The successful person always produces projects beyond imagination, which astonish great men, and their magnificence impresses the onlookers.

The successful person never lives on the margin of events, nor remains valueless, nor becomes a mere redundancy in a margin.

Those whose aspirations lie in (the fulfillment of) their desires and the pursuit of their pleasures, will find that their errors multiply, their deficiencies become evident, and their shortcomings and defects become manifest.

They who devote themselves to the service of inkpots (i.e. use them in writing), are served by pulpits (i.e. are sought for by people wanting to talk to them). They, who persist in reading books, become respected among the dignitaries.

It is a characteristic of the successful to be optimistic, hopeful, and capable of avoiding errors, emerging from crises, and turning losses into profits.

A river consists of single drops (gathered together), wealth of single *Dirhams*, a book of single pages, and a lifetime of single hours.

Yesterday has passed away, and today is on the deathbed, and tomorrow has not been born yet: so, avail yourself of your current moment, for it is booty that one gains without a fight.

The faithful believer always has a thinking mind, an expressive vision, a remembering tongue, a thankful heart, and serious determination, all of which make him patient on labor.

In a single minute, one could exalt (Allah The Almighty) one hundred times, or read a page from the *Mus-haf*, or go through three pages of a book, or write a message, or recite *Soorat Al-Ikhlaas* thrice.

An-Naysaaboori, may Allah have mercy upon him, read *Saheeh Muslim* one hundred times; Ibn Seena (Avicenna) read Al-Faaraabi's writings forty times; and some people read *Al-Mughni* ten times.

All the books of Ibn Hazm, may Allah have mercy upon him, were burnt; thereupon, he re-wrote them all from his memory. Qataadah, may Allah have mercy upon him, memorized a camel load (of books). Ash-Sha'bi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "*I have never written with ink anything on blank paper except I memorized it.*"

Sufyaan, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept standing in prayer for the whole night until morning came upon him. Ibn Al-Mubaarak, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept studying *Hadeeth* with another scholar while standing until dawn.

Muhammad Al-Ameen Ash-Shinqeeti, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept verifying a single question for a whole day and night.

Yahya ibn Ma'een, may Allah have mercy upon him, wrote "*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*" one thousand, thousand times; and he would write a *Hadeeth* fifty times. Ash-Sha'bi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "*Poetry occupies the least*

share of my memory. But even, if you like, I could keep reciting poetry to you for as long as a month (without repeating a single verse).”

The successful person gains the respect of even the children of his town; and the unsuccessful person exposes himself to the ridicule of everyone, even if he apologizes to them one thousand times.

Whoever pursues knowledge early in the morning as a crow does, with the patience of a donkey, and the determination of a lion, availing himself of all opportunities like a wolf, shall gain much (of that) knowledge.

The lazy person is deprived (of all good); the idle person is regretful; blessing lies in activity; and whoever goes forward and travels here and there surpasses other men (in experience).

It is a very difficult road, that on which Nooh (Noah), may Allah exalt his mention, wailed (over his people), Yahya (John), may Allah exalt his mention, was slain, ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was killed, the blood of ‘Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was shed, ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was assassinated, and many of the *Imaams* were lashed on their backs.

Ibn Durayd copied his book *Kitaab Jamharat Ash‘aar Al-‘Arab* four times (by way of revision); Al-Bukhaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, kept revising his *Saheeh* for sixteen years, during which he used to take a ritual bath and offer a two-*Rak‘ah* prayer when recording every *Hadeeth*.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may Allah have mercy upon him, worked as a hired hand (to earn that which would help him seek knowledge, while Abu Haneefah, may Allah have mercy upon him, sold some leaf stalks of his house so he could spend on

knowledge. Sufyaan, may Allah have mercy upon him, underwent starvation for three days in pursuit of *Hadeeth*.

An-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to read, write, memorize, pray and exalt (Allah The Almighty), and whenever he was overpowered by slumber, he would take a little nap while sitting. Ash-Shawkaani, may Allah have mercy upon him, had twelve lessons everyday; and Ibn Seena (Avicenna) used to write twenty-five pages per day.

Idrees, the Prophet, may Allah exalt his mention, was a tailor; Daawood (David), may Allah exalt his mention, was a smith; Moosa (Moses), may Allah exalt his mention, was a hired shepherd (of sheep). Ibn Al-Musayyib, may Allah have mercy upon him, was an oil seller, and Abu Haneefah, may Allah have mercy upon him, was a draper.

Hasten (to do good deeds) before one's lifetime is over, and the traces are recorded!
There is no survival within the limits of night and day.

Seek refuge with Allah The Almighty from despicable ambitions, trivial determination, unwise goals, a tough disposition, and an unfeeling soul.

'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, sought martyrdom in Badr, and (when he did not get it) they said, "*It may be that you will get it on Uhud.*" He went to it but (when he failed to get it) he said, "*Perhaps I will get it in Al-Khandaq.*" He sought after it and (when he failed to get it) they said to him, "*Then, seek it in Khaybar.*" When he went to it, they said, "*The time (of martyrdom) has been delayed.*" On that he said, "*How excellent it is to seek martyrdom in the mosque!*"

Knowledge is retained by acting upon it, teaching it, and writing compositions on it. Whoever memorizes, repeats, and studies it, will have it inculcated in his breast.

The successful person should be strongly observant, continuously attentive, organizing time, meditating (on signs) and aspiring to achieve the most supreme of goals.

According to Ibn ‘Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them, *“I humiliated myself when I was seeking knowledge, thereupon I became honorable when I came to be sought for (by others).”* According to ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, *“Comprehend knowledge before you become sovereigns.”* According to

Mujaahid, may Allah have mercy upon him, *“No (too) bashful or (very) arrogant person would seek knowledge.”*

The discouragement of pursuing success lies in an inclination to be followed, a soul that enjoins (evil), when the world is given preference (over the Hereafter), in deep-rooted cold ambition, and sustaining hope without working towards toward the goal.

The successful person gives no importance to misfortunes, nor endures (others’) reminders of generosity. He works during his time of rest, for his rest lies in his work time.

Idleness brings about corruption; the permissible things occupy (i.e., keep one from his Lord); most people are discouraging, and a child brings about cowardice, grief and niggardliness.

Imaam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, spent seventy years earning sustenance from the charge he received for renting a store; and Al-Khaleel ibn

Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, spent seventy years on bread and oil; and Sufyaan Ath-Thawri, may Allah have mercy upon him, spent seventy years on barley bread.

The successful person's profits are earning the good pleasure of his or her Lord by faith; of his or her family by being affable to them; of the people by having good manners; and of the society by the benefit (it receives from him or her).

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was ruler for two years, during which he established the caliphate and defeated the apostates. 'Umar ibn 'Abd-Al-'Azeez, may Allah have mercy upon him, was caliph for two years, during which he spread justice, settled cases of injustice and revived the religion. Ibn Abi Al-Ja'd, may Allah have mercy upon him, learnt religious knowledge for two years, after which he became the *Mufti* of Al-Madeenah.

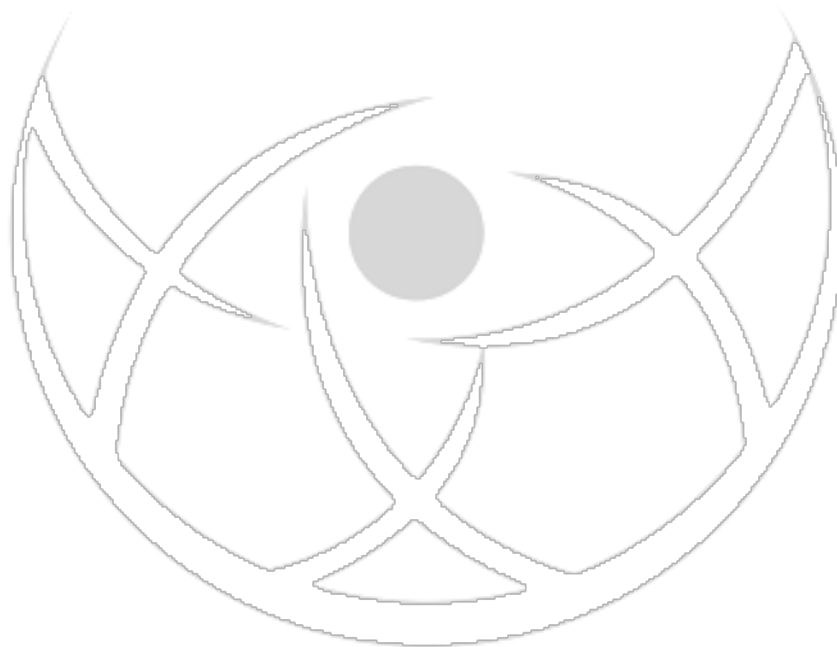
As-Sarakhsi was put into prison and (during the period of imprisonment) he authored *Al-Mabsoot* in thirty volumes. Ibn Al-Atheer was subject to house arrest, during which he composed *Jaami' Al-Usool* and *An-Nihaayah* in thirty volumes.

Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, was put into prison, and (during his period of imprisonment) he produced *Al-Fataawa Al-Kubra* in thirty volumes.

Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to write his passing thoughts with the book of *Al-Fat-h*. Ibn Khaqaan kept a book in his pocket to be able to read it at all times. Al-Khateeb Al-Baghdaadi, may Allah have mercy upon him, used to read while walking.

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd-Al-‘Azeez, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, *“I had an ambitious soul: it aspired to governorship thereupon I was given it. Then it aspired to the caliphate, and I also was given it. Now, it aspires to Paradise.”*

Abu Mansoor Ath-Tha‘aalibi used to sew fox leather, and his endeavor promoted him until he became the litterateur of the world (at his time). Al-Farraa’ worked at making fur before he became one of the greatest grammarians. Ibn Az-Zayyaat was an oil seller before he was appointed minister.



Chapter Two

Aim As High As the Stars

Allah The Almighty Says (what means):

- *{To whoever wills among you to proceed or stay behind.}* [Quran 74:37]
- *{And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him.}* [Quran 22:78]
- *{And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.}* [Quran 3:133]
- *{And the forerunners, the forerunners.}* [Quran 56:10]
- *{So for this let the competitors compete.}* [Quran 83:26]

The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, said:

- *“The strong believer is better and dearer to Allah The Almighty than the weak believer, and there is good in both. Be concerned over what benefits you, and seek the aid of Allah.”*
- *“A wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from doing evil deeds) and does good deeds to benefit him after his death; and the deficient person is the one who subdues himself to his inclinations and desires and expects from Allah the fulfillment of his vain desires.” [Ibn Maajah and At-Tirmithi]*
- *“Avail yourself of five (things where you could do deeds) before (you are afflicted with) five (things where you could not do deeds): (avail yourself of)*

your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your free time before your occupation, your wealth before your poverty, and your life before your death.”

He, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, said to one of his Companions: *“Help me fulfill your wish by offering more prostrations (in prayer).”*

He, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, said to another: *“Keep your tongue always moistened by the remembrance of Allah.”*

He, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, used to say (by way of supplication): *“O Allah! I seek refuge with You from anxiety and grief; and I seek refuge with You from powerlessness and laziness; and I seek refuge with You from cowardice and niggardliness; and I seek refuge with You from being overpowered by debt and oppressed by men.”*

He, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, used to spend the whole night standing (in prayer) until his feet were cracked. He would sometimes tie a stone on his abdomen because of the severe hunger pangs he suffered from. He spent the greater part of the night in prayer. He endured harm, abuse, insult, dismissal from his homeland, injuries in the battlefields, and starvation. He strove against the enemies of Allah The Almighty, from among the polytheists, Jews, Christians and hypocrites. He was, from among all the people, the greatest in striving, the best in manners, the most glorious in faith, the wisest in opinion, the noblest in munificence, the most generous, the most pleasant in companionship, the most courageous, the most openhanded, the highest in endeavor and aim, the most incisive in determination, and the most patient, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.

His Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, persevered with him, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and strove beside him with the best of strife, and did (wonders) that make could cause heads to turn grey: they sacrificed their property and souls, offered all their possessions in the cause of Allah The Almighty, and confronted the most difficult situations to please Him. They were severely ill treated by their enemies: some of them were killed, others injured, a few had their body parts cut off. Some of them were forced to eat tree leaves out of starvation, and others were dragged on the scorching sand of the desert, while others were put into prison. Even then, they remained steadfast and unshakable. For the sake of their religion, the punishment seemed pleasant to them, the difficulties easy, and the bitter, sweet.

Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, spent all his property in the cause of Allah The Almighty, and spent his entire lifetime in seeking the pleasure of Allah. He used to pray, fast, give charity, engage in *Jihaad* (struggle), and was hospitable, generous, righteous and truthful. He was the one who remembered (Allah), was a worshipper (of Allah), devoutly obedient (of Allah), and he used to turn (to Allah The Almighty in repentance again and again), so that he would be called to enter Paradise from all its eight gates on the Day of Judgment, due to his merits and many good deeds. He was the companion of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, in *Hijrah* (emigration), and his friend in the cave. He never failed nor delayed to take part in a battle. He was the first who proceeded to Islam, *Hijrah*, *Jihaad*, righteousness and piety. He would not have deserved the title of As-Siddeeq (sincere affirmer of truth), nor the crown of acceptability, nor the medal of righteousness except after great striving, upright conduct and overwhelming virtue.

Al-Faarooq ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, reached the peak of asceticism and piety, along with his previous glorious ranks of faith, self-sacrifice, *Hijrah*, *Jihaad*, charitableness, fear of his Lord The Almighty and consciousness of his Master. He also established justice among his subjects, regulated the affairs of Muslims, perfected his job as a caliph, was truthful in secret and public and fair in both states of pleasure and anger. Moreover, he had deep religious comprehension, strove with reasoning to learn the Divine revelation, and deduction of rulings from the text.

‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan, *Thun-Noorayn*, may Allah be pleased with him, hastened to respond to Allah The Almighty and His Messenger, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, embraced Islam from the early years, and stuck to the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, during times of adversity and prosperity. He was true to Allah The Almighty in his *Hijrah*, *Jihaad* and charitableness. He equipped the army of *Al-‘Usrah* (difficulty) from his own wealth, and bought the well of Roomah and made it an endowment for the use of Muslims. He was so competent in the recitation and memorization of the Quran, that he offered *Tahajjud* prayer reciting it most nights. Furthermore, he always felt bashful of Allah, and sought to please Him. He was true in speech, generous, upright and conscientious.

‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib, the Commander of Believers, Abu Al-Hasan, may Allah be pleased with him, was the bravest of the brave and the greatest of horsemen. He attended all the battles, combated with his sword, and killed the strong (among the disbelievers). He had a great share of merits, for he was blessed in conduct and sincere in intention, not to mention his abundance of knowledge, his sharp understanding, his bright eloquence, his unparalleled bravery, his great abstinence,

his self-sacrifice, his strong endeavor, and his incisive determination. He undoubtedly deserved his high rank, for he had earned it.

Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, the chief of the reciters (of the Quran), may Allah be pleased with him, was a competent reciter and memorizer of the Quran. He perfectly learnt and then acted upon his knowledge, and was true and sincere (to what he learnt), until he became a great sign in that science, and a dependable reference in that regard.

Az-Zubayr ibn Al-‘Awwaam, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the ten (who were given the glad tidings of Paradise), received injuries in all parts of his body in the cause of Allah The Almighty, thereby he came to be the disciple and companion of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, in Paradise.

Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqaas, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the ten (who were given the glad tidings of Paradise), and the maternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, was true to Allah The Almighty. Thereupon his supplication was responded to (by Allah The Almighty), and constantly firm, thereupon Allah The Almighty Helped him emerge victorious over the Persians, and Raised at his hands the head of every Muslim, and Suppressed the enemies of Allah. He indeed was as strong as a lion with its claws.

‘Abd-Ar-Rahmaan ibn ‘Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, one of the ten who were given the glad tidings of Paradise, was so charitable that he once gave an entire caravan along with its camels and load in charity, thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah The Almighty. He spent most of his wealth on good deeds that were doubtless well directed and accepted by Allah The Almighty.

Ibn ‘Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them, the most knowledgeable scholar of this *Ummah* and the interpreter of the Quran, whose knowledge about the

Sharee'ah was encyclopedic, was earnest in his pursuit of knowledge, and he was extremely concerned over it. He indeed reached the summit of understanding revelation and taught it to the people. He was such a marvelous wonder in his memory, comprehension, eloquence, munificence and generosity, that he became the leader of the people, due to his great patience, striving, teaching and learning.

Mu'aath ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, the leading scholar, demanded knowledge from the tutor of every goodness, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and then acted upon all that he learnt. He became a hardworking, humble, abstinent scholar. He invited to Allah The Almighty, and taught His servants, and strove in His Way. He enjoined what is right and forbade what is evil. He was endowed with deep comprehension of the religion, noble manners, lenience with the people, and munificence.

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, the master of memorizers, preserved *Hadeeth* in his memory, and conveyed it to the *Ummah* in truth. He indeed was the trustworthy memorizer. He divided his night between worship, remembrance of *Hadeeth* and sleep. He engaged in teaching, giving *Fatwa*, instructing and striving. That is because of his great spirit of striving, decisive determination, and powerful spirit.

Khaalid ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, Sayfullaah Al-Maslool (the sword of Allah, unsheathed against His enemies), recorded his name in the register of the immortal and immortalized his mention in the archive of conquerors with letters of light. He supported Islam with his sword and fought great battles, exposing himself to danger and offering his soul to death, while giving no importance to difficulties. He became the epitome of self-sacrifice, high esteem, glorious rank and great preeminence.

Sa‘eed ibn Al-Musayyib, may Allah have mercy upon him, the chief of the *Taabi‘is* (successors), never missed the opening *Takbeer* with the *Imaam* for sixty years. He once spent three days on a journey in pursuit of a single *Hadeeth*. He spent most of his time sitting in the mosque. He was the people's reference of *Fatwa* and the interpretation of dreams. He was in the habit of standing for the whole night in prayer. He was strong for the sake of Allah The Almighty, zealous over safeguarding the sacred ordinances of Allah, truthful, abstinent, oft-returning (to Allah The Almighty in repentance), generous, reverent and well-established in knowledge.

‘Ataa’ ibn Abi Rabaah, may Allah have mercy upon him, a black freed slave whom Allah The Almighty elevated with knowledge, spent thirty years in the sacred precincts of Makkah in search of knowledge, until he became the people's *Mufti* (one who issues religious verdicts). He was austere in his life, sincere, pious, encyclopedic in knowledge and well-versed in narration; he deserved to be the *Imaam* (leader) of the people.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri, may Allah have mercy upon him, a freed slave, strove in quest of knowledge and acquaintance with the *Sunnah*, and patiently engaged in [learning about] Prophetic tradition. He was endowed with eloquence, clarity of thought and etiquettes, thereby his speech was medicine for hearts, and his instruction was life for souls. At the same time, he was among the most abstinent, humble, oft-returning (to Allah The Almighty in repentance), fearful (of Allah The Almighty), pious and upright. For this reason, Allah The Almighty elevated him to the supreme standing, and enabled him to occupy the highest position.

Az-Zuhri Muhammad ibn Shihaab, may Allah have mercy upon him, the maintainer of *Sunnah*, and the leader of people in *Hadeeth*, sought knowledge in

spite of his destitution and poverty. However, he patiently persevered, endured, and set out on journeys to meet scholars, and gave special care to *Hadeeth*. He became the best memorizer (of tradition) among the people of his time. He was endowed with religious comprehension, knowledge and generosity like the generosity of Haatim (At-Taa'i, the most generous person during the pre-Islamic days), until his fame for munificence became widespread. Thus, he deserves to have his name respected in the compilations of *Sunnah*, and inscribed in the hearts.

'Aamir Ash-Sha'bi, may Allah have mercy upon him, the *Imaam* who encompassed all branches of knowledge, was recognized for his serenity, forbearance, and vast knowledge. He was conversant with *Sunnah* and preeminent in literature. He was gifted with an excellent mind, good heart and sharp understanding, so that he became the envoy of 'Abd-Al-Malik (Ibn Marwaan) to the Roman Emperor, due to his religious comprehension, knowledge, quick wittedness, eloquence, nobility, and influential personality. It is he who said, "*I have never written anything in a blank paper, nor have I kept anything in my heart (i.e. memorized it), and it betrayed me.*" That is, he had never forgotten any piece of knowledge. He also says, "*Were I to keep reciting poetry to you for a month, I would not repeat a single verse*", due to the vast amount of poetry he memorized.

Abu Haneefah, may Allah have mercy upon him, the great jurispudent, strove in pursuit of knowledge, and was endowed with good understanding and rich intellect so that the people became dependent on him in jurisprudence. He dedicated himself to deducing (rulings), abstained from the world and rejected rank and offices. He shied away from being a judge, and instead satisfied himself with working in a drapery. Furthermore, he was in the habit of constant worship, abstinence, submissiveness and truthfulness, and was gifted with matchless intelligence.

Maalik ibn Anas, may Allah have mercy upon him, the *Imaam* of the abode of *Hijrah*, the author of *Al-Muwatta'*, excelled the people in intellect, and spent his entire lifetime in quest of *Hadeeth* and gained the witness of seventy scholars for his competence in giving *Fatwa*. People traveled to him from different directions. He was endowed with majesty, reverence and a pleasant appearance, beautiful outward and sincere inward.

Ash-Shaafi'i, may Allah have mercy upon him, the *Imaam* of the people from horizon to horizon, who established the rules and foundations (of jurisprudence), utilized his body and time in the pursuit of knowledge. He undertook journeys (to the different sources of knowledge), and travelled here and there, until his knowledge was proverbial, and he became like the sun to the earth and like a source of healing for afflicted bodies. Moreover, he was endowed with patience, thankfulness, abstinence, politeness, eloquence, excellence, high spirit of striving, clarity of thought and encyclopedic knowledge.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may Allah have mercy upon him, the *Imaam* of *Sunnah*, suppresser of religious innovations, and hero of the affliction, went around different regions, and trekked the wide desert in pursuit of Prophetic traditions, enduring severe hunger, fatigue, extreme poverty and abstinence. With all of this, Allah The Almighty tried him with the great affliction: he was put in prison and was lashed, but he never submitted. Allah The Almighty then elevated him (to the highest position) due to his great knowledge, patience and truthfulness, until his mention was recorded among the immortals, and he became the *Imaam* of all the people.

'Umar ibn 'Abd-Al-'Azeez, may Allah have mercy upon him, the fifth rightly-guided abstinent, striving caliph, and the reviver (of religion) at the beginning of

the first century, abstained from this world, and turned away from desires, and instead devoted himself to knowledge, worship, abstinence and justice. Allah The Almighty established, the *Sunnah* through him, suppressed religious innovations, enlightened the way of reform and renewed the features of prosperity. He was an *Imaam* of guidance, a scholar of religion, and a [learned educator](#) of the *Ummah*.

Sufyaan Ath-Thawri, may Allah have mercy upon him, the abstinent and learned scholar of his time, abstained from the perishable (the transitory world) and devoted himself to the enduring (Hereafter). He memorized *Hadeeth* and perfected the provision (of piety), gave *Fatwa*, taught people, enjoined (what is right) and forbade (what is evil), and instructed and advised (his people) with sincere intention and incisive determination. He continued to save his breath (not to engage in much useless talk) and instead educate those with him until death came to him.

‘Abdullaah ibn Al-Mubaarak, may Allah have mercy upon him, for whom Allah The Almighty combined all good things, was truly a working, abstinent, worshipping, striving scholar, a narrator of *Hadeeth*, a memorizer (of *Sunnah*), a charitable rich person, an eloquent littérateur, had an impeccable reputation and was held in high repute. He persisted in doing good, persevered on acquisition (of knowledge), and continued doing every virtuous act, so that Allah The Almighty endowed him with the favor of acceptance (among the people).

Imaam Al-Bukhaari, may Allah have mercy upon him, is the author of *As-Saheeh*, for whom Allah The Almighty opened the path to knowledge: he engaged, day and night, in the pursuit of the traditions, until he became the *Imaam* (of *Hadeeth*) in the different regions, and his memory was proverbial. He was endowed with perfect knowledge and precise understanding, along with noble moral conduct and upright abstinence. He left a blessed heritage in knowledge, *As-Saheeh* (the book of

the authentic *Hadeeths*), the most glorious book after the Noble Quran. May Allah reward him, on behalf of the *Ummah*, with the best reward, and place him in the highest Paradise.

The same is true of Imaam Muslim, may Allah have mercy upon him, the composer of *As-Saheeh*, and also of all the composers of books of *Saheeh*, *Sunan*, *Musnads* and dictionaries, from among the *Imaams of Hadeeth*, endowed with a spirit of striving and noble ambitions.

Consider, for instance, Seebawayh, may Allah have mercy upon him, the leading grammarian, who crossed vast deserts and directly transmitted from the various scholars, and then authored his book *Al-Kitaab* which turned out to be the greatest book in Arabic grammar, and all who came later were dependent on it, thereby he deserved appreciation and thanks. He had a high position in the sight of the Muslims due to his sharp intelligence and excellence. There are also hundreds of grammarians who authored books and enriched gatherings. Had it not been for fear of being lengthy, I would have mentioned each of them. However, I must be content with the elite and those of distinguished mention, and unique abilities.

Muhammad ibn Jareer At-Tabari, may Allah have mercy upon him, the author of *Tafseer*, encompassed the branches of knowledge, and made various compositions, and had precedence in explaining the Book of Allah The Almighty, until he became the master of scholars of *Tafseer*, and his book was the greatest in this field. It was well-received by kings, and widely-accepted by the different regions, and from its flood of knowledge, all the coming generations quenched their thirst. It is the reference for every scholar of *Tafseer*, and the support on which everyone who is knowledgeable of the Book of Allah The Almighty depends.

Consider also Ibn Hibbaan, may Allah have mercy upon him, the author of the *Saheeh*, the marvelous genius and sharp-witted narrator of *Hadeeth*. He went around the various regions and forsook his homeland (in quest for knowledge) until he excelled others in this respect. He narrated *Hadeeth* from more than two thousand Shaykhs. Take a look at his book, *As-Saheeh*, and the other books, which confirm his indescribable encyclopedic knowledge, precision and excellence.

From among the great *Imaams*, a mention may be made of Abu Is-haaq Ash-Sheeraazi, may Allah have mercy upon him, the Shaafi'i scholar of *Fiqh*, and the author of the well-known delightful and beneficial compositions. He used to repeat each of his lessons about one hundred times, and his analogy about one thousand times, until he became very thin, due to his great striving and strong determination.

From among the intelligent philosophers, logicians and physicians, a mention may be made of Ibn Seena (Avicenna), the leader, who excelled in his specializations, and persisted, day and night, in quest of his philosophical doctrine. He worked hard, acquired (knowledge), persevered and continued working until his hard work became proverbial. He wrote a notebook every day. He became the most marvelous wonder in his area of specialization, and the one endowed with the sharpest intelligence in the world, regardless of the corruption of his philosophical doctrine.

A mention also may be made of Al-Faaraabi, the philosopher, the son of a soldier, who dedicated himself to studying the books of the Greek philosophers until he became well-versed in them and he perfected them all. He turned to be one of the greatest philosophers, due to his patience, striving and hard work in his area of specialty.

A mention may be made also of Ar-Raazi Al-Fakhr, may Allah have mercy upon him, who gathered and gained an understanding of knowledge, composed and authored books, and engaged in instructing, teaching and delivering speeches. He became the most distinguished scholar of his time. He was endowed with worldly splendor, grandeur and great wealth, and with Allah The Almighty will be the appointment.

From among the Lord-conscious scholars, a mention may be made of the grand Imaam An-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, who died at the age of forty. He left a vast amount of blessed, beneficial knowledge; and sufficient as a representative of his work is *Riyaadh As-Saaliheen*. This grand *Imaam* worked day and night, was steadfast in fasting, standing (at night in prayer), and became famous and eminent in knowledge, forsook sleep and rest, and worked hard even at night, and he abandoned marriage to devote himself to knowledge, in which he produced marvelous wonders.

A mention may also be made of Shaykh Al-Islam, the privileged scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, the chief of scholars and the master of jurisprudents. He worked hard, and obtained a high rank. He engaged in verification, scrutiny, documentation, teaching, and delivering speeches, until he became the reviver and reformer of his time. He left many compositions, all indescribable in excellence, goodness, authenticity and depth. He is the ideal of a Lord-conscious scholar, who acted upon his knowledge, out of abstinence, fear of Allah The Almighty, oft-returning (to Allah), striving, truthfulness, humbleness, generosity, bravery and leadership. He attained that superiority, after the help of Allah The Almighty, by virtue of his patience, hard work, sleeplessness, tiredness, suffering and fatigue. That is because he endeavored too strongly to be satisfied with weakness, and was too determined and decisive to be inferior. Thus, he

excelled the scholars of his time, and became the great reference of *Fatwa*. He was a great luminary and a matchless marvel.

A mention also may be made of his disciple Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, the author of the blessed compositions that benefited everyone, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with him. He was endowed with an excellent turn of phrase and composition, strong argument and proof, deep rooted knowledge and understanding. He was thankful and patient, and used to remember (Allah The Almighty), fast, stand (at night in prayer) again and again, besides being an abstinent worshipper.

Remember also Ibn Rajab, may Allah have mercy upon him, the diligent memorizer whose compositions are the best witness to his knowledge, understanding and encyclopedic comprehension. He made a blessed appreciated effort in the explanation of *Hadeeths*, and extraction of the treasures of tradition. I do not know any scholar as excellent as that great scholar in the explanation of *Hadeeth*.

Remember also Al-Haafith Ibn Hajar , may Allah have mercy upon him, the memorizer of his own time, and the author of *Fat-h Al-Baari*, in which he explained *Saheeh Al-Bukhaari*. He completed it in twenty-five years, and wrote its introduction in seven years, and the product was marvelous and amazing. In addition to it, he composed tens of volumes on many topics. He was persistent in the acquisition (of knowledge), writing and teaching, and he never wearied nor became exhausted and he became the best of memorizers, the chief of connoisseurs, and the master of *Hadeeth* scholars. Whoever wishes to know about this man, let him glimpse through *Al-Fat-h*, and there is no *Hijrah* after *Al-Fat-h*.

A mention also may be made of As-Suyooti, may Allah have mercy upon him, the possessor of various branches of knowledge, who had precedence over others in writing and composition. He retired when he was forty years old. He left an enormous heritage of well-known beneficial writings.

Before them, we should remember, as well, Ibn Al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy upon him, the instructor of his own time, and the greatest of writers in terms of the number of compositions, which were as many as about one thousand books and epistles. He engaged his time in the pursuit of knowledge, memorization, religious comprehension, teaching, composition and instructing, thereby he became the most notable luminary and wonder of his time, in eloquence, clear-sightedness and supremacy.

From among those of a strong spirit of striving and determination, a mention may be made of Sultan Noor Ad-Deen Mahmood Zanj, may Allah have mercy upon him, the just, submissive, abstinent, worshipping, striving ruler. He was in the habit of fasting (by day) and standing (at night in prayer), remembering (Allah The Almighty more often), and being thankful and patient. He was endowed with sound opinion, and a rightly-directed methodology. He established justice among his people, and ruled them with equality, abandoned the inferior world, and was endowed by Allah The Almighty with martyrdom after a lifetime of many righteous deeds.

A mention also may be made of Salaah Ad-Deen (Saladin) Al-Ayyoobi, may Allah have mercy upon him, the conqueror of Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*), and the defeater of the Crusaders, the supporter of religion and the establisher of justice. He was pious, religious, Allah-fearing and trustworthy. Allah The Almighty elevated him due to his sincerity, and supported him with truthfulness, and opened the way of *Jihaad* to

him. He troubled his enemies, spread the tolerant religion (of Islam), and worked hard in the pursuit of superior ambitions with a great deal of striving.

Similar to them were the leaders from among the conquerors, who were true to their covenant with Allah The Almighty, with their combination of great endeavor, patience, true determination, strong will and high esteem.

From among those too, a mention may be made of the reviver of Islam in this age, Imaam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd-Al-Wahhaab, may Allah have mercy upon him, with whom Allah The Almighty renewed His religion, supported His *Sharee‘ah*, and made superior His Word. He called for monotheism, destroyed idols, removed polytheistic practices, corrected the belief, and strove in the way of Allah The Almighty in the requisite manner, with determination more incisive than the sword, and endeavor stronger than time, as well as great patience, sincerity and sacrifice. Allah The Almighty elevated his position and esteem and raised his mention, and suppressed his enemies. He deserved appreciation, the rank of imamate and the rank of a Lord-conscious scholar.

From among the contemporary scholars whom we sat with, saw and recognized, a mention may be made of the grand Imam and scholar Shaykh ‘Abd-Al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, may Allah have mercy upon him, who possessed the three attributes of knowledge, forbearance and generosity. He was an Imaam of the *Sunnah*, a follower of the guidance of the righteous predecessors, a scholar of *Hadeeth*, a jurisprudent, scholar and an educator. He was humble, patient and lenient with and merciful towards people. The tasks he used to do were beyond the capacity of a group of men. He taught, gave *Fatwa*, reviewed books, sent messages to different regions, used his good offices (for others), added (more to the Arabic library), gave advice, instructions and lectures, and attended conferences. He was abstinent, well-

mannered, tolerant, and used to remember (Allah The Almighty), perform *Tahajjud*, give in charity, make peace between the people, enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil, be patient when harmed, compassionate for the needy, merciful towards the poor, and have love for the students of knowledge.

We should not forget, in this respect, the learned, abstinent, jurisprudent Imaam Muhammad ibn ‘Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon him. He was an intelligent jurisprudent and learned scholar. He engaged in teaching and giving *Fatwa*, with patience, wisdom and kindness. He perfected many *Sharee‘ah*-related sciences, and continued to teach and give *Fatwa* until he was well-recognized in the World. At the same time, he abstained from offices and ranks, and turned away from this world. He left after him gifted students and advantageous books, which are now a comfort to the eyes of scholars, in terms of possessing a sound creed, strong evidence, and beautiful style.

Remember also the *Muhaddith* of this age, and the learned scholar of *Sunnah* in his time, the Shaykh and Imaam Muhammad Naasir Ad-Deen Al-Albaani, the author of famous compositions and beneficial treatises. He spent all his life, day and night, in the service of the *Sunnah*, regarding correction, designation and exclusion of the *Dha‘eef* (weak), and evaluation (of *Hadeeth* narrators). He followed the guidance of the righteous predecessors, and was mindful of the affairs and issues of Muslims in the East and West.

Remember also Muhammad Al-Ameen Ash-Shinqeeti, may Allah have mercy upon him, the memorizer, fundamentalist Imaam, reflective scholar of *Tafseer*, linguist, and keeper of his era. He used to improvise the lessons he delivered, producing marvelous wonders, due to his superior intellect, pure mind, and strong memory. He amazed scholars and had a legendary status among the intelligentsia.

Chapter Three

Know Yourself

This is to recognize the talents Allah The Almighty has endowed you with, and to use them in their fitting areas, whether they are scientific, practical or professional. Each person has his or her way and disposition: *{growing} several from a root or otherwise, watered with one water* [Quran 13:4] *{and every people knew its watering place.}* [Quran 2:60] *{For each [religious following] is a direction toward which it faces.}* [Quran 2:148] People are not similar, so, it is due on the rational to be competent in what he is able to do well, and each is made to find it easy to do that for which he has been created. Whoever observes the lives of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, will find that each was competent in his area of specialty.

Although Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, for instance, had a share in almost all things, he was prominent in the office of caliphate and leadership, where he established justice, and adhered to abstinence, sincerity and truthfulness.

'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was strict in all that related to the ordinances of Allah The Almighty, hard on His enemies, and just in his ruling.

'Uthmaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was merciful, compassionate, in the habit of performing *Tahajjud*, giving in charity, righteousness, bashfulness and kindness.

‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was courageous, incisive, an eloquent speaker and a sharp-witted jurisprudent. Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with him, was the chief of reciters (of the Quran). Mu‘aath, may Allah be pleased with him, was the *Imaam* of scholars. Khaalid ibn Al-Waleed, may Allah be pleased with him, is a symbol of heroism. Ibn ‘Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with them, was the interpreter of the Quran. Hassaan, may Allah be pleased with him, was the chief of poets. Zayd ibn Thaabit, may Allah be pleased with him, was the leading scholar of the obligatory shares (of inheritance). Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, was the master of narrators (of *Hadeeth*), and so on.

So, acquire your experience by yourself, your skills, your experiments, your practice of work and your lifestyle.

It is true that books impart wisdom, but in no way can they produce wise men. Those who excelled in different sciences and arts not only learnt at schools, but also at the school of life, and the factory of experiments.

A book about swimming may give the essentials of that art. However, it cannot prevent those who do not know how to swim from sinking. The best way for him is to go down into the river to learn to swim from direct practice.

The same is true of an excellent speaker: he will not be competent and distinguished in speaking only by reading dozens of volumes in the art of oratory. Rather, he would excel because of ascending the pulpits and delivering speeches, in which he may fluctuate between right and wrong, success and failure, and because he continues to hone his experience and train himself, until he reaches the summit of excellence in this skill. If you would like to be excellent in any field, science or work, devote yourself to it wholeheartedly, taste its suffering, and burn with its

love, and have longing for it until you adore it: and people, as you know, are different in their ways of adoration.

Do not think that success will be presented to you as a gift on a golden plate: the most despicable victory is that which is given as a gift.

The dearest success is that which is obtained as a result of effort, perspiration, suffering, tears, blood, sleeplessness, tiredness, fatigue and sacrifice.

People never have mercy upon the unsuccessful, and the unsuccessful always incurs upon himself the anger of others. It is said that the falling of the camel causes more knives to share in slaying it, which they would not dare to do should the camel remain standing. This is because people only respect the upstanding, successful person, someone they can look up to, whether that person is a scholar, an intellectual, a rich man, a dignitary, or a reformer, unlike the unsuccessful dimwitted person, whom no eyes look at -- for no one observes them.

Work hard and exert your greatest effort in order to get what you want: ***{And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him.}*** [Quran 22:78] Beware of laziness, postponement, procrastination and false hopes: all of which are the possessions of the bankrupt who ***{were satisfied to be with those who stay behind.}*** [Quran 9:87]

Indeed, Allah The Almighty loves those who strive, and dislikes the helpless and unsuccessful person. The most delicious meal is the one which a person gets from the sweat of their brow, and the most comfortable sleep is that which one has after trouble; the best satiety is the one a person gets after hunger. The rose does not exude its scent until it is damp, nor does incense emit fragrance until it burns.

To be sure, the game caught by an untrained hound is unlawful, unlike the game of the trained hound, because it is caught after effort, exercise and learning.

Hasten (to do good deeds) before one's lifetime is over, and the traces are recorded!
There is no survival within the limits of night and day (time).

Chapter Four

Attributes of the Successful Knowledge Seeker

To strive in an unrelenting manner, have persistent desire, a strong yearning for knowledge, matchless enthusiasm and keenness on benefit.

To know the glorious fruit of knowledge, its praiseworthy consequences, and important outcomes.

To acquire knowledge gradually, step by step, section by section, and category by category.

To start with the most important, followed by the important, and give priority to principles over branches.

To avail of the faculty of memory during childhood and the early years of youth.

To specialize (in a particular area of knowledge), and discover one's preferred field and focus on it, so that the talent would emerge.

To vary the methods of acquisition (of knowledge), between receiving at the hands of the masters, reading books, listening to lessons, meditation and study.

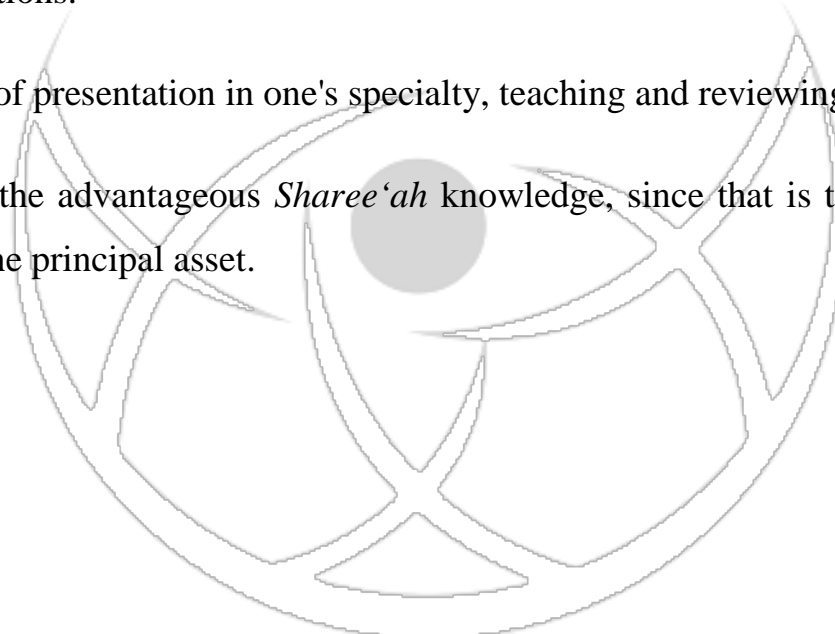
To repeat the items of study, evaluating the piece of information, verifying the question, and thus, becoming well-established in knowledge.

To give due care to creativity and invention, and discard emulation and imitation.

To be conversant with other fields of knowledge, and update oneself with the newest inventions.

To take care of presentation in one's specialty, teaching and reviewing at all times.

To act upon the advantageous *Sharee'ah* knowledge, since that is the crux of the matter, and the principal asset.



Chapter Five

Signs of the Excellent Scholar

To act upon what he learns, have the blessing of knowledge appear on him, and be sincere to his Lord in secret and public.

To benefit the people, have a good influence on those around him, spread, and not conceal his knowledge.

To endure harm, tolerate the harshness of people, and behave humbly towards them.

To abstain from this world, and to seek instead that which is with Allah The Almighty, and to turn away from the perishable for the sake of the enduring.

To have good moral conduct and noble traits, and to free one's disposition from all that is shameful.

To strive hard in educating and reforming the new generation.

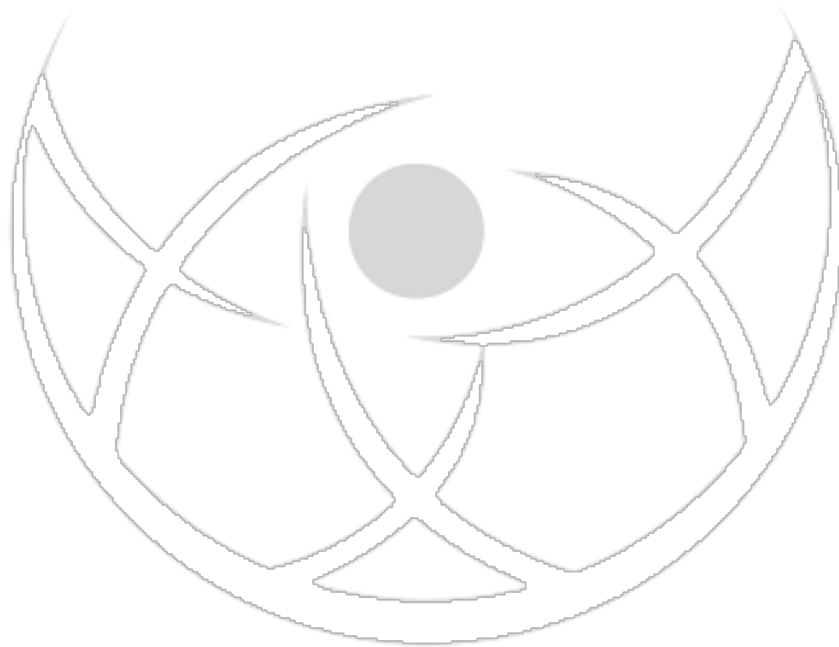
To discard (blind) imitation and rely on proof from the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah*.

To be well-established in knowledge, by delving into facts, knowing the goals and perceiving the mysteries of *Sharee'ah*.

To strive one's utmost in the pursuit of truth, and do one's best to know what is right.

To avoid strange opinions, odd statements, fabricated *Hadeeths*, and false narrations.

To be well-acquainted with one's own reality and time, and what takes place in his environment.



Chapter Six

The *Daa'iyah* (Caller) to Allah, and His beautiful Attributes

To have clarity of thought, immersed in knowledge and outstanding in his piety. This is because the weak-minded are foolish, the ignorant are blind, and the impious are disappointed.

To be a persistent seeker of knowledge, keen on benefit, safeguarding his time and interested in higher matters.

To enjoin good upon people and abide by it, and forbid evil and urge people to desist from it, as he should be the first to do what he says. In other words, the effect of his statement is clearly reflected on his deeds, and both his outward and inward states are righteous.

To be lenient with people, make things easy and not difficult, give glad tidings, and not cause others to have aversion (for the religion), and be acceptable rather than be unacceptable to the people with his good manners.

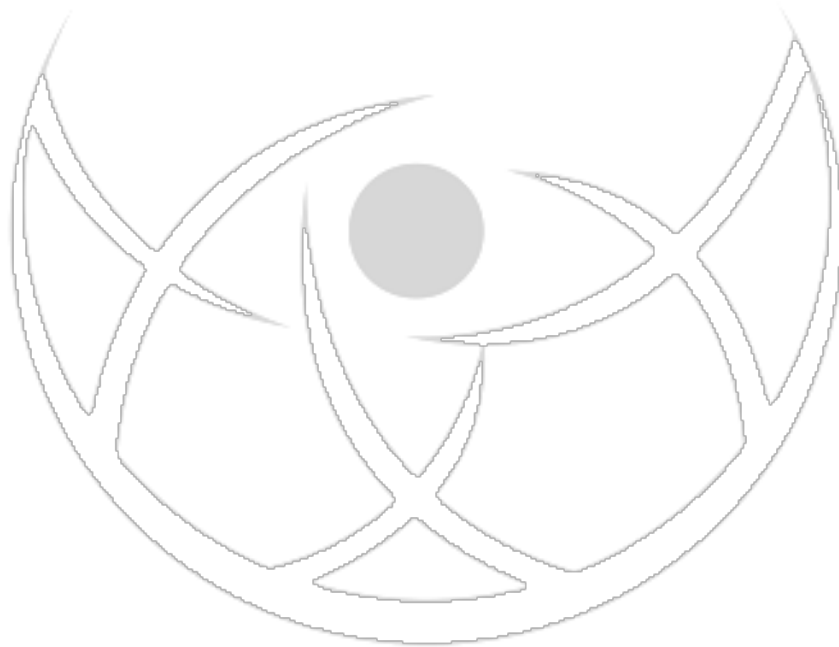
To be wise in his words and deeds, to seek what is more correct, and to do what is more fitting, and guide, by the permission of Allah The Almighty, to what is more upright.

To adopt a gradual manner in his *Da'wah* and reform, give knowledge question by question, and tackle problems issue by issue.

To be abstinent and desirous for what is with Allah The Almighty, to disdain thanks and dislike praise, and to flee from exaltation on earth, and to seek for nothing other than the pleasure of Allah The Almighty.

To hold fast to the Book and the *Sunnah*, be far from religious innovations, have a clean heart, lenient manners, a cheerful face and much bashfulness.

Not to depreciate, scoff at or ridicule people. Instead, he should be chaste in speech, pure-hearted and clean-handed.



Chapter Seven

Attributes and Etiquette of a Glorious *Mufti*

To verify what he says, seek (the truth) in his answer, be pious in his *Fatwa*, and fear his Lord.

His main concern should be to rescue himself before rescuing people, and in his *Fatwa*, he should be true in intention, sincere to Allah The Almighty, and truthful in his public and private talk.

To adhere to evidence, hold fast to proof, depend on (valid) argument and avoid (blind) imitation. One should stay away from the pursuing peculiar questions and odd statements.

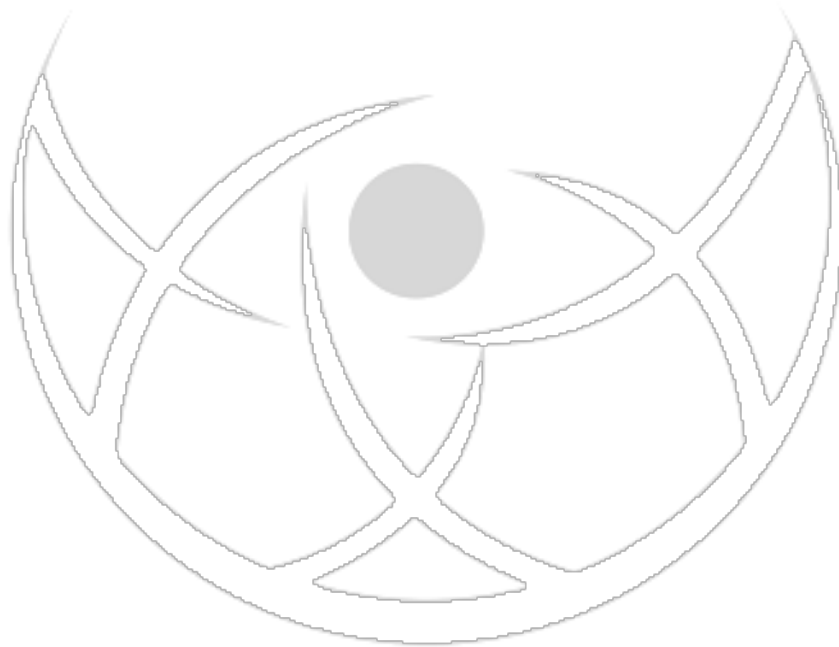
To know about the people's states, conditions and lives, so as to give judgments in accordance with their circumstances, and *Fatwas* in accordance with their reality.

Not to put the questioner to difficulty by many (unnecessary) statements, but rather to give him the correct answer as easily as possible.

To be certain of the question, well-established in one's answer, and whenever one does not know something, one should be humble enough to admit it. This, in itself, constitutes half of knowledge.

To be well-acquainted with the statements of different scholars each with his evidence, and distinguish the strong from the weak among them, and the preponderant from the outweighed (opinion).

To pay careful attention to the science of traditions and narration, in terms of differentiation between the *Saheeh* (authentic) and the *Dha'eef* (weak), and to persist in research, study and benefit.



Chapter Eight

The Successful Tutor and His Good Qualities

To set a good example to be followed by his students and a role model to his pupils, loveable and dear to them.

To prepare his course material well, and be eager to benefit and promote his students in their ascent towards knowledge.

To be free from harshness, intractability, severity and rudeness, and to be affable with his students, so that they reciprocate the same with him.

To be devoted to his area of specialization, distinguished in his faculty, and well-acquainted with his subject.

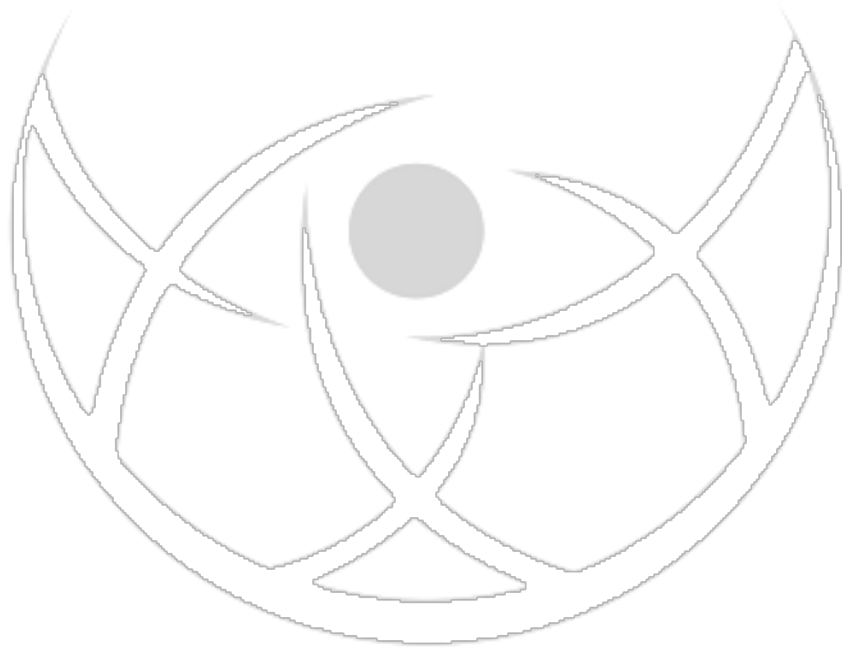
To be well-read, possess encyclopedic knowledge, and to learn about contemporary culture and the issues of his *Ummah*.

To have fervor for what he says, motivate his students, have enthusiasm for his statements and arguments, and be far from dryness and coldness.

To maintain his work hours permanently, be punctual in his appointments and regular in his job.

To rise above suspicions, forsake all vicious characteristics and be characterized by good manners.

Not to be involved in mockery, falsehood, frivolous and obscene speech, but instead to be lenient, sweet and pure in his speech and words .



Chapter Nine

The Distinguished Administrator and Signs of Creativity

To be accurate in his affairs, have control over his administration, and be well-acquainted with the affairs of his employees.

To be systematic, i.e. to place everything properly, and let his actions speak louder than his words.

To finish the day's work on the same day, without procrastination or being troubled.

To distribute tasks according to a person's specialty, talents and potential.

To be good in his follow-up, decisive in his resolution, seek advice and contemplate.

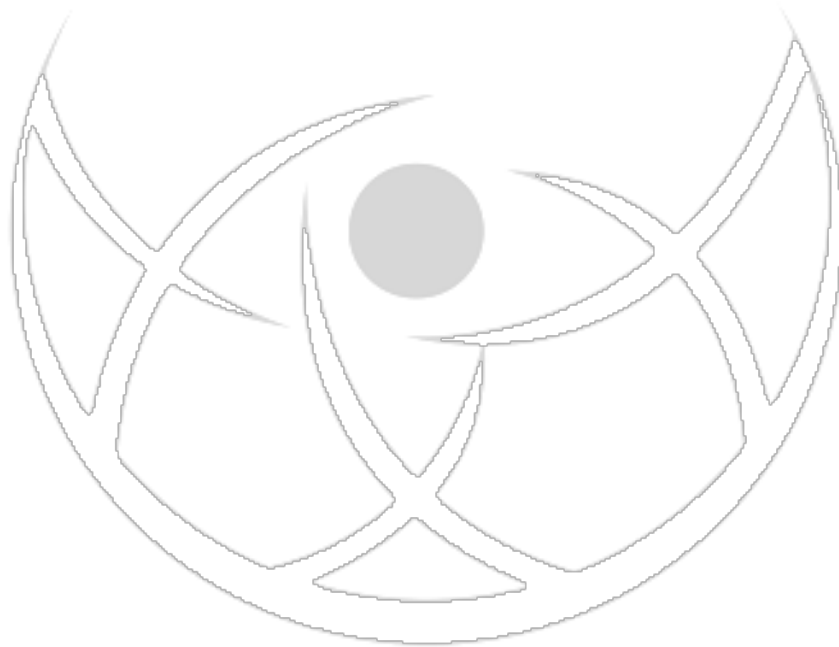
To be good company, tolerant, strong whenever strength is necessary, and rigid but without violence.

To be active, intuitive, continuously observant, attentive, and appreciative of perfection and quality.

To obtain benefit from the experiences of others, by reading and sitting with them; and finding rest during his work hours, and work during his leisure time.

To like new initiatives and love creativity, find his comfort in uniqueness, and seek to achieve excellence.

To avoid repeating error, benefit from failure, beware of decline, and be optimistic, not pessimistic or desperate.



Chapter Ten

Major Characteristics of an Influential Preacher

To be sincere, unprejudiced, and beware of showing off, conceit and arrogance.

To rectify one's speech with Arabic, and to be well-trained in delivering speeches and sermons.

To memorize many traditions which help to preach from the Quran, the *Sunnah*, literature, stories and proverbs.

To avoid boring tautology in order to attract the people.

To adopt the middle path between hope and fear, so that people would neither feel safe from the plan of Allah The Almighty, nor despair of relief from Him.

To avoid clichéd or strange statements that are unacceptable to the thinking person.

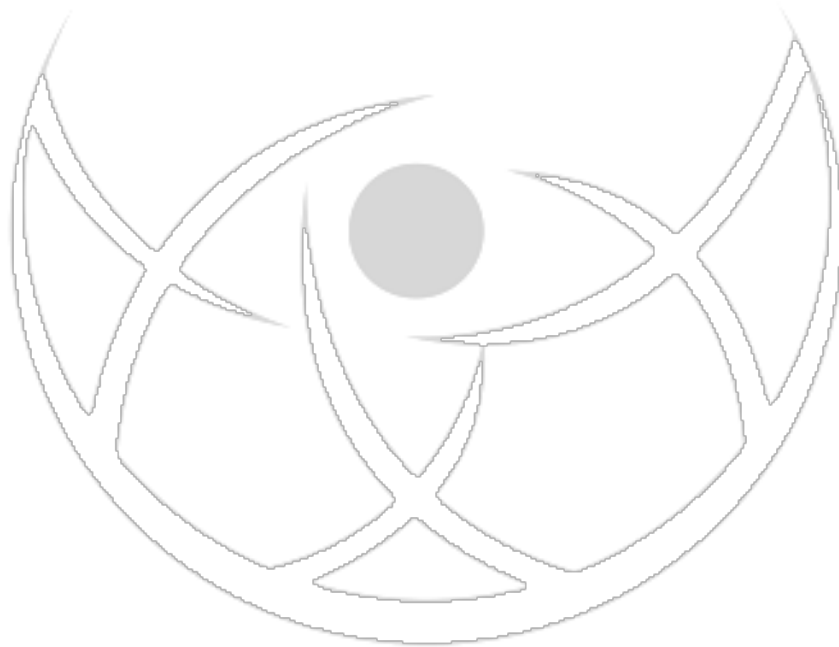
To observe the different conditions and mental states of people, and to seek the appropriate way and time to give them instruction, lest they get bored.

Not to criticize the addressees, nor to make indirect insinuations against them, nor to be harsh on them.

To be lenient with the people and kind to them while addressing them, and not to make matters hard for them.

To pay attention to the art of making speeches, good performance, sound pronunciation, a clever beginning, good references, and a beautiful conclusion.

Not to praise or dispraise oneself, and to relate the biographies of the righteous, with the observation of their agreement with the *Sunnah*.



Chapter Eleven

Pre-Requisites of the Outstanding Author

Not to write before he is well-established in his art, and delves into its details and fathoms its mysteries. The goal of authorship is to gather the dispersed, abridge the prolonged, rearrange what has branched out, explain the ambiguous, and explicate the abstruse.

To be in the middle between brevity which is not defective, and wordiness that is not boring.

To adhere to good phraseology and easy wording, avoid declamation and strangeness, and forsake obscene and slang words.

To review what is written, and present it to the more knowledgeable people, seek the advice of others, and review it repeatedly.

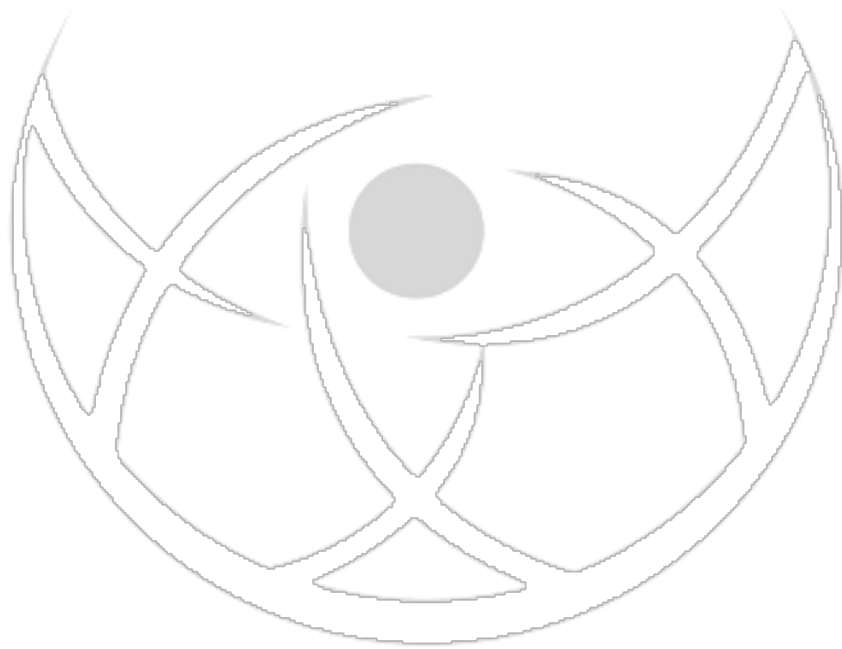
To choose issues that have not been addressed, for which there is a dire need.

To write only on his own specialty, and not to deal with issues over which he has no mastery, as it is blameworthy to do so.

To rid his writing of falsehood, peculiarity, strangeness, abuse, offense or condemnation; not to be conceited or proud of what he writes as this is a source of temptation.

To attribute statements to their sources, and beware of theft, plagiarism, misappropriation, or distortion of other compositions: *{And whoever betrays, [taking unlawfully], will come with what he took on the Day of Resurrection.}*

[Quran 3:161]



Chapter Twelve

The Ideal Father and His Attributes

To turn to Allah The Almighty at all times seeking righteousness for his offspring and himself, and supplicating to his Lord.

To be a good role model for his children in word and deed, i.e. to have his deeds always conform to his words.

To play with and discipline the young; be pleasant with the elders and keep them good company.

To care (for his children) by honoring the rights of Allah The Almighty, observing sanctities and maintaining the limits of Allah The Almighty within themselves.

To beware of leaving his house and being unduly absent for long intervals with no dire necessity, but rather to look after his family by sitting with them, talking to them, teaching and instructing them.

To guard his family from all means of *Fitnah* (trial) and instruments of perdition and falsehood, and to purify his house from all that is shameful.

To be a watcher over their beliefs, conduct and behavior in the house, at school and with the people.

To choose their companions, and follow them up well.

To observe their age while directing them, by simplifying to them the instructions and stories, and setting forth examples.

To beware of a luxurious life, as it leads to corruption and extravagance, and then to *Fitnah*, and to beware of heedlessness as it leads to destruction.

To make them memorize the Book of Allah during their childhood, and prevent them from imitating the disbelievers and the dissolute and from behaving in an effeminate manner.

