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GLODEN GUIDELINES

IN THE PATH OF

KNOWLEDGE



Shaykh Muhammad Awwamah

GOLDEN GUIDELINES IN THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

By

Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah

حفظه الله تعالى

Translated By:

Muḥammad Ibn Mawlānā Hārūn

Abāsoomar

Title	Golden Guidelines In The Path of Knowledge
Author	Al-Muhaddith Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah (May Allah protect him)
Translated by	Mawlānā Muḥammad Ibn Mawlānā Hārūn Abāsoomar
First Edition	Sha’bān 1433 A.H. July 2012

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Transliteration

The following method of transliteration of the Arabic letters has been used in this book:

ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	<u>h</u>
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh

ص	<u>s</u>
ض	<u>d</u>
ط	<u>t</u>
ظ	<u>z</u>
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y

Some Arabic phrases used in this book are as follows:

ﷲ	(<i>Jalla Jalāluhū</i>) The Sublime – used for Allāh ﷲ
ﷺ	(<i>Sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam</i>) May Allāh send blessings and salutations upon him - used for Nabî ﷺ
ﷺ	(<i>‘Alayhis salām</i>) Salutations upon him – used for all prophets
ﷺ	(<i>Radiyallāhu ‘anhū</i>) May Allāh be pleased with him – used for the <u>Sahābah</u> ﷺ
ﷺ	(<i>Rahimahullāh</i>) May Allāh have mercy on him – used for deceased saints and scholars

Long vowels

ا ā
ي ī
و ū

Short vowels

ـَ a
ـِ i
ـُ u

Foreword



This booklet which is in your hands is a translation of a talk delivered by my honorable teacher; the great Muhaddith of Syria who currently resides in *Al-Madinatul Munawwarah*, *Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awāmah* (حفظه الله).

On the eve of 6th Rabi’ul Thani, 1428 (15 May 2007), *Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awāmah* (حفظه الله) was invited for a seminar held in his honour by the respected well wisher, *Sayyid ‘Abdul Maqṣūd Khawjah* in Jeddah.

This seminar named: “*Al-Ithnayniyyah*” in Arabic, is held every Monday at his residence. Each time one particular outstanding scholar is acknowledged for his service and contribution to knowledge.

Several speakers are invited to contribute to the discussion.

This particular episode was unusually over attended and received much applause from one and all. The

highlight of the seminar was the speech delivered by the esteemed *Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awāmah* (حفظه الله) which consisted of sterling advice for all scholars. These were the inner most concerns and feelings that the Shaykh poured out to the audience. **They are actually solutions to the academic crisis that has clouded the circles of knowledge today.**

Realizing its importance and relevance to the English speaking student, I took permission from my respected Shaykh (teacher) to translate it into English.

The translation was based on a written copy of the talk that my Shaykh handed to me personally.

I also added points from the audio recording of the seminar.¹

May *Allāh Ta’ālā* inspire the translator and the reader with this priceless advice which emanated from a luminary who is **engaged in the service of Hadith for the past fifty years approximately.**

¹ A copy of which is available for those who are interested.

Muhammad Ibn Haroon Abasoomer,
Camperdown,
South Africa.



Introduction

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْأَوَّلِينَ
وَالْآخِرِينَ، وَآلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْغُرِّ الْمَحَجَّلِينَ، وَالتَّابِعِينَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

In this lifetime, it is vital for a person to maximise his gain as well as his benefit to others.

Due to me preceding many of my bretheren time-wise only, in the path of knowledge, I deemed it most important that I note a few points that will brighten the path that I have traversed prior to them. In fact it is the right of the new generation that the earlier generation pass on their experience to them. Therefore after beseeching Almighty *Allāh* for his inspiration and rectification, I have compiled this for them as well as myself, which I have entitled:



*“Golden Guidelines in the Path of
Knowledge.”*

Academic Ancestry

All of us have a family lineage. A student is also supposed to have an ancestry in knowledge. This consists of his teachers.

A student of knowledge who has no teacher, is actually illegitimate in his knowledge. He holds no weight. *Allāh Ta’ālā* has blessed me with the opportunity of studying under many stars of knowledge in my country. From amongst all of them, I will briefly elaborate on two of them specifically. These are my greatest benefactors in knowledge.

They are:

1. *Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirājuddīn* , and:
2. *Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh Abū Ghuddah* .

I have chosen to mention the two of them because of the lasting impression they have left on me with regards to meticulously researching the issues of knowledge.

As for *Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirājuddīn* رحمہ اللہ, I had the great privilege of sitting in his company from the very early days of my study.

I will just quote one of his golden advices that had truly set the standard for me and had brightened the path of knowledge for me.

While he was teaching us the famous book *in Hanafī Fiqh; Al-Ikhtiyār* in the fifth year, I came to his lesson one day after reading a strange incident about *Imām Bukhārī* رحمہ اللہ.

That great unique *Imām* who had served Islam so faithfully.

He was asked about an infant boy and girl who were fed the milk of the same goat. Can they marry each other?

The narrative claimed that *Imām Bukhārī* رحمہ اللہ said that they will not be able to do so. (due to them being foster siblings)

So the *‘Ulamā* of the town had banished him due to his extreme ignorance!

When I quoted this to *Shaykh ‘Abdullāh* ﷺ, he addressed me with complete dignity and wisdom, calmly saying: “Don’t believe everything you read.”

By *Allāh*, this statement served as an enormous lesson for me, a module for me to follow. It was an entire code of conduct that had he summarised in one sentence!

I heard it from him **fifty** years ago which I now quote for others to benefit.

As for *Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh*, his favour upon me in the field of knowledge and *tahqīq* (research) is invaluable.

In 1382 A.H. (1962) he began researching and publishing various books of knowledge.

I served him in this path and worked under his supervision till he had to leave the country and come to Riyadh, where he proved to be a source of guidance to all in this field.

I continued to maintain my link with him and enjoy his company, studying under him till his demise. I never severed my relationship with him.

I repeat what I said earlier; the real support for a student in his academic lineage is his teachers. It is not proper for him to cut off himself from them ever! He should never rely upon himself, claiming that, “I have become such and such a scholar, I have produced so many students, I have published such and such books and so on....”

No!


My *Shaykh*, *Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh* رحمته الله wanted the correct pronunciation of the book of *Ibnul Qayyim*

رحمته الله :

أَعْلَامُ الْمُوقِّعِينَ whether it was with a *fathah* or *kasrah* on the *hamzah*?

Despite the fact that *Shaykh* used to emphasize on it being with a *kasrah* whilst in *Halab* (Alepo), but when it came to verifying this, he never relied upon his view, or considered it as final. Rather he wrote from Riyadh to his ustadh, the great teacher and ‘*Allāmah*; *Shaykh Mustafā Az-Zarqā* رحمته الله who was in ‘*Ammaan* (Jordan) at the time. *Shaykh Al-Zarqā* رحمته الله replied that both pronunciations would be correct. *Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh* accepted this and noted it as such in his book.

He never allowed himself to rely upon his personal findings, and close the matter at that.

This is what he taught to those around him too, myself included; to refer to and seek clarification from those whom we were confident in. *Shaykh*  would sometimes benefit from his students, and even their students! This is the trait of a true ‘*Ālim*, and the value that one should have for acquiring the truth.

The First Guideline

Sincerity

Indeed the first brick in the foundation of Islāmic practices is: *ikhlās* (sincerity). Undoubtedly, sincerity can only accompany deeds that conform to *shari'ah*; it is impossible for one to have sincerity in sin.

In the field of knowledge, sincerity actually means: that the student should be cognisant of the fact that he is only seeking knowledge for the pleasure of *Allāh* ﷻ. Not for any other motive like: acquiring worldly gain, fame or even because he hails from a family of *'ulamā*, etc.

The real secret of one's success in both the worlds is: *ikhlās*. The *muhaddithūn*, while discussing the importance of *ikhlās*, often quote the statement of *Imām Hammād ibn Salamah* ﷺ :

مَنْ طَلَبَ الْحَدِيثَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ مُكَرَّبَهُ

“He who acquires ḥadīth for motives other than the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ will certainly be taken to task.

Since the knowledge of ḥadīth was the prevailing one at that time, Imām Hammād رحمته الله specifically mentioned it. Or else it is naturally understood that the student of *tafsīr*, for that matter is in no way less important than a ḥadīth student, as this applies to all the branches of knowledge of Islām. Indeed any student who is void of sincerity in his study, will be dealt with severely by Allāh ﷻ.

فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“None can feel secure from Allāh’s plan except the losers.”
(7:99)

‘Allāmah Al-Sakhāwī رحمته الله² has quoted another statement of someone who said:

² *Fathul Mughhīth*, Vol.2, Pg.312

مَنْ طَلَبَ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ لِلَّهِ سَعِدَ وَشَرُفَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ،
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْلُبْهُ لِلَّهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ

*“Whoever seeks this knowledge (of Dīn) for the pleasure of
Allāh ﷻ, will attain the fortune and lofty ranks of this world
as well as the hereafter,
Whilst the one who lacks in this (sincerity), loses in this world
and the next.”*

The importance of sincerity can neither be encompassed in a single lecture like this one, nor in many more lectures.

I would suffice to say: “The basic ingredient for success that the ummah has lost today is **Ikhlas** (sincerity).”

The Second Guideline

Envisage the glory of knowledge

The second point for a student to note is that he should realise the glory of this knowledge which he is attaining as well as the high rank it holds. This will instil in him two characteristics. **The first** being that he will sacrifice everything in acquiring as much of this esteemed knowledge (as possible). Especially when he realises that *Allāh* ﷻ has chosen him for this from amongst the millions of this *Ummah*. **Secondly**, he will ensure that he protects this esteemed knowledge and not degrade it or bring it to disrepute. If a student fails to realize the value and lofty status of knowledge, he will never be able to fulfil these two duties.

Indeed a student should feel honoured of *Allāh* ﷻ's favour upon him. He should never consider himself as inferior by observing some of his childhood friends as doctors or engineers and others as professionals

whilst he “only managed to study *dīn*”, or “become an *imām*” or a “lecturer at the Friday sermon”. He should realise that his orders and prohibitions stem from the orders and prohibitions of *Allāh* ﷻ. His endorsements and interdictions are viewed as being from *Allāh* ﷻ. He speaks with the speech of *Allāh* ﷻ and *Allāh* ﷻ endorses his speech. Can there be any privilege greater than this!

In being an *imām* of a *masjid*, he is in actual fact an intermediary between the creation and their Lord. They have to follow him in prayer (*salāh*) and their link to *Allāh* ﷻ is via him. This is the most befitting lofty rank of that student who realises the right of *Allāh* ﷻ and the right of knowledge upon himself.

Indeed the discussion of the virtue and glory of knowledge and its bearers will take up much time. However, I shall suffice on only one aspect which could serve as a sample for the others.

Allāh ﷻ has revealed in the noble *Qurān* the path of *īmān* (faith) and its implementation for the entire

mankind. Since there is a need for someone to convey and interpret the meanings of the Noble *Qurān*, *Allāh* ﷻ sent His messenger *Muhammad* ﷺ as an inviter, conveyer and interpreter. However, just as life and death apply to the rest of humanity, they also apply to *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ. Therefore, there had to be some individuals who would substitute him and inherit his legacy. *Allāh* ﷻ in His wisdom decreed that these individuals be the ‘ulamā. *Nabi* ﷺ designated this in his noble words when he said:

"إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ"

“Verily the Ulamā are the heirs of the Ambiyā.”

Only the rank of Prophethood is above the rank of the deputies of *Allāh* ﷻ. This deputy is the student of today, the scholar of tomorrow and the *muftī* of the future.

I would like to quote the valuable words of *Imām Ibnul Qayyim* رحمه الله from the foreword of his book “*Plāmul muwaqqi‘in*”. He writes:

“Since the duty of conveying the message of *Allāh* ﷻ is based on the knowledge of what is being conveyed as well as sincerity in this regard, therefore, only those people who have the qualities of knowledge and sincerity are suitable for this pedestal. This is done via narrating *ahādith* and issuing *fatwa*. They ought to know what they are conveying and do so with sincerity. Added to this, one needs to have good manners, beautiful conduct and fairness in statements and actions. All one’s affairs; private and public should be the same. The opportunity of executing affairs on behalf of the rulers of the world is undisputed. It is considered to be from the highest of all privileges. How greater a privilege would it be to execute duties on behalf of *Allāh Ta’ālā*, the Lord of the worlds?

It is expected from the one elevated to this pedestal to make adequate preparation, and to equip himself thoroughly. He should be aware of the significance of the position he has been afforded. He should never hesitate to speak out the truth, for indeed *Allāh* ﷻ will guide him and assist him. The merit of this

position (of *fatwa*) is clearly understood from the fact that *Allāh* ﷻ has Himself assumed it:

ويستفتونك في النساء قل الله يفتيكم فيهن

“And they seek the fatwa from you regarding women. Say Allāh will give you the fatwa regarding them.” (4:127)

This in itself is sufficient accreditation and honour. *Allāh* ﷻ says elsewhere:

يستفتونك قل الله يفتيكم في الكلالة

“They ask a fatwa from you. Say Allāh will give a fatwa concerning Al-Kalālah (those who leave neither ascendants nor descendants as heirs).” (4:176)

Therefore, the *muftī* should be aware that in issuing a *fatwa*, he is in actual fact deputizing on behalf of *Allāh* ﷻ. He should be convinced that he will be questioned tomorrow on the Day of Judgment and that he will have to stand before *Allāh* ﷻ.

The first person to assume this lofty position was the leader of all messengers, the *imām* of all the pious, the seal of all prophets, slave, messenger and ambassador of *Allāh* ﷻ to the creation ﷻ.” (End of quote.)

In this passage, *Imām Ibnul Qayyim* رحمه الله has highlighted that a *muftī* in actual fact is a *Khalifah* (vicegerent) of *Allāh* ﷻ, since *Allāh* ﷻ has Himself issued *fatwas* concerning certain issues that were presented to *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ. On this note, he chose to give his book the following meaningful and unique title:

إِعْلَامُ الْمُوقَّعِينَ عَنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“*Educating those who are the executors and signatories on behalf of the Lord of the worlds.*” What he means is that when a *muftī* issues a *fatwa* and signs it off, he is actually signing on behalf of the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of the heavens and the earth. As if to say that what I am saying or writing is the statement of *Allah* ﷻ and *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ also.

It is important that one who has been given this unparalleled position possesses the most complete and sublime characteristics. *Imām Ibnul Qayyim* رحمہ اللہ has already alluded to some of them.

Coming back to the point of this second guideline, certainly the rank of knowledge is such that the one who seeks it needs to spend the most dear and near things to acquire the lowest of its ranks. It is indeed the rank of deputising on behalf of *Allāh* ﷻ and the coveted legacy of *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ. It is definitely the noblest of all ranks and the highest of positions.

The fact that the student of today, scholar of tomorrow and the *muftī* of the future has the power of execution on behalf of *Allāh* ﷻ who is the King of Kings, is sufficient to highlight the significance of the rank to which *Allāh* ﷻ has raised him. Therefore, it is equally important for him to safeguard this lofty privilege and to protect it with his soul and blood.

It is imperative that the student of knowledge realizes the rank of the knowledge he seeks, as well as the rank of the position which *Allāh* ﷻ has afforded him.

Furthermore, knowledge is indeed great and sacred, therefore whoever fulfils the right of this sanctity and honour of knowledge will in turn be honoured and elevated by knowledge itself. He who fails in this regard, **will himself be disgraced**, not knowledge.

Knowledge will always remain exalted since it is *Allāh* ﷻ who has granted it its significance. The knowledge we are speaking about is that which corresponds to the noble *Qurān* and the sublime *Sunnah*. *Allāh* ﷻ will never allow the noble *Qurān* and the sublime *Sunnah* of *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ to become a means of amusement for the mischief makers in the world.³

³ At this point, *Shaykh* implored the audience to take lesson from the life of the great *Imām Asad ibn Furāt (Rahimahullāh)* which has been beautifully illustrated by *Shaykh 'Ali At-Tantāwī (Rahimahullāh)* in his book: *Rijāl minat Tārikh*. In Brief, *Imām Asad ibn Furāt (Rahimahullāh)* was very respected by the people of his era. He even became the leader of the Muslim army.

The Third Guideline

Striving and Sacrificing for Knowledge

The third guideline actually stems from the previous one, which was that a student should be prepared to spend every valuable item in acquiring knowledge. Most definitely, a sign of him doing so and which also indicates towards the sincerity of this student is that with the passing of each day, he increases in the following:

1. In his love and enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge.
2. In scrutinizing himself for what was acquired for each moment that passes.

At the end of his life he advised the army by saying: "O people! By *Allāh*! none of my forefathers were given the mantle of leadership, neither did they enjoy such dignity as I have been honoured with. All this that I have achieved is through knowledge. Therefore ensure that you also acquire knowledge. Apply your minds and exert your bodies in its acquisition, **you will achieve the best of both worlds.**" These were his final words before being blessed with Martyrdom. May *Allāh* shower his Mercy on him.

The poet says:

أَلَيْسَ مِنَ الْخُسْرَانِ أَنْ لَيَالِيَا تَمُرُّ بِلاَ نَفْعٍ وَتُحْسَبُ مِنْ عُمْرِي

*“Is it not a great loss that nights are finished
Fruitlessly as my life diminishes.”*

There are several eye opening examples of this in the lives of our predecessors, rather in the children of our predecessors. *Imām Sakhāwī* رحمته الله says⁴:

Salamah ibn Shabīb رحمته الله has reported amongst the most extra ordinary narratives of the predecessors in this regard. He says: “We were by *Yazīd ibn Hārūn* رحمته الله when the people crowded around him causing a child to be trampled beneath them. *Yazīd ibn Hārūn* رحمته الله (the *Shaykh*) said: “Fear *Allāh* سبحانه and see what has happened to this child”. When they checked, they saw that the pupils of his eye had been gouged out, and whilst in that state he was saying, “O *Abū Khālīd*

⁴ *Fat’hul Mughīth*, Vol.2, Pg.313

(referring to the *Shaykh*) give us more knowledge.” At this, the *ustādh* exclaimed:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“Verily we belong to Allāh and unto Him shall we return.”

“This lad still asks for more despite being in such a condition!”

Sharīf At-Tilimsānī رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ (710 A.H.-771 A.H.) lived a short life of 61 years, but despite him being from the eighth century, he is considered in the circles of knowledge as parallel to the *Mutaqaddimīn* (the earlier scholars). Once while he was at the lesson of his *ustādh* *Abū Zayd ibn al-Imām* رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ, the *ustādh* began to speak about *jannah* and its luxuries. The student enquired “Will we get the opportunity of engaging in knowledge in *jannah*?” The *ustādh* (*Abū Zayd* رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ) gave him a general answer that yes, in *jannah* a person will get whatever he wishes for. Therefore, if you wish to engage in knowledge, Allah ﷻ will make that a reality. The student said: “Had you told me that there would be no knowledge in *jannah*, I would have

said then there is no enjoyment therein". The *Shaykh* was very pleased with this and made *dūa* for him.

Hardly a few years had passed when this student reached a very high rank in knowledge. One day whilst he was in the gathering of the same *ustādh*, *Imam Abū Zayd* رحمته الله, the *ustādh* misinterpreted a particular *mas'alah* (verdict). *Imām Tilmisānī* رحمته الله pointed this out. The *Shaykh* retracted his view, made *dūa* for him and jokingly composed the following poem for him:

أَعْلَمُهُ الرَّمَايَةَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ	فَلَمَّا اشْتَدَّ سَاعِدُهُ رَمَانِي
وَكَمْ عَلَّمْتُهُ نَظْمَ الْقَوَائِي	فَلَمَّا قَالَ قَافِيَةً هَجَانِي!

"I teach him archery daily.

When his arm became accurate, he shot me.

*I spent a lot of time teaching him the arrangement of
poetry.*

Then when he was able to do so he ridiculed me!"

These two incidents emphasise the accuracy of the statement of *Imām Ibn ‘Atā’ullāh Al-Iskandarī* رحمہ اللہ, the author of *Al-Hikamul ‘Atā’iyyah*:

مَنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ بَدَايَةٌ مُحْرِقَةٌ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ نِهَآيَةٌ مُشْرِقَةٌ

*“He who does not have a burning beginning
Cannot expect a bright future.”*

These are models for us students to emulate during our early years so we may aspire to achieve bright futures like theirs.

The Fourth Guideline

Knowledge is for Practice

The fourth guideline which is applicable to students specifically as well as every other Muslim, is that he embeds in his heart and mind that the purpose of knowledge is *ʿamal* (practice), not for lectures and speeches, or assemblies and conferences or for discussion and debate. Neither is it for *tahqīq* (research) or *tālīf* (compilation). The only objective of knowledge is *ʿamal* (practice), so that a student may save himself first from ignorance and misguidance and thereafter in accordance with the *tawfīq* of *Allāh* ﷻ to save the rest of the *ummah*. This will result in him being an *ʿālim* and a *muʿallim* (a teacher who is educated himself), a *hādī* and a *muhtadī* (a guide who is guided) and an inviter to *Allāh* ﷻ with the divine assistance of *Allāh* ﷻ. This is the result of beneficial knowledge. *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ has taught us to beg from Allah ﷻ for the very same thing every morning after the *Fajr salāh*.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَرِزْقًا طَیِّبًا، وَعَمَلًا مُّتَقَبَّلًا

“O Allāh, I ask you for beneficial knowledge, wholesome sustenance and acceptable deeds.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also sought refuge against knowledge which has no benefit, i.e. knowledge which has no benefit and has outwardly no harm as well. However that knowledge which has no benefit in reality, is also harmful in the sense that the student spends his time, effort and wealth behind it but gets nothing out of it. Therefore, he loses out. Hence, there is even more reason to seek refuge in Allah against harmful knowledge.

In short, as ‘*Allāmah Nawawī* رحمه الله has pointed out, knowledge is of three types:

- 1) Beneficial
- 2) Harmful
- 3) Not beneficial and outwardly not harmful.

Beneficial knowledge is the one which we should beg from *Allāh* ﷻ and that which we ought to strive to

achieve. We should seek refuge in *Allāh* ﷻ from the other types of knowledge.

The following is the *dūa* which *Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar* ﷺ used to recite in *sajdatut Tilāwah*⁵:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدَ سَوَادِيْ، وَبِكَ اَمَنْ فُؤَادِيْ،
اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ عِلْمًا يَنْفَعُنِيْ، وَعَمَلًا يَرْفَعُنِيْ

“O Allāh, for You has my body prostrated; in You does my heart believe.

O Allāh, grant me knowledge which will benefit me and actions which will elevate me.”

Beneficial knowledge is one which leads a person onto practising upon it, and it forces him to do so as quick as possible because of the fear of his knowledge becoming a proof and a curse against him instead of it being an argument in his favour. This habit is

⁵ Shaykh pointed out in the audio lecture that the narration does not explicitly state that *Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Umar* ﷺ recited this in *sajdatut tilāwah* specifically. It is possible that he would recite this in every sajdah, but *Imām Ibn Abī Shaybah* has included it in the chapter of *sajdatut tilāwah*. Whatever may be the case, we need to recite this all the time; whether we are in sajdah or not. *End of quote.*

binding on the special class of Muslims, i.e. the *‘ulamā* and students of knowledge and it is also required from the rest of the Muslims. Whenever they learn of any of the teachings of Islām, they promptly implement it.

Allāmah Dhahabī رحمہ اللہ has quoted in *Siyar Aa’lāmin Nubalā*⁶ under the biography of *Abū ‘Uthmān Al-Hīrī* رحمہ اللہ that whenever he heard of something which he did not yet adopt, he would ensure that he immediately practises upon it.

Allāmah Dhahabī رحمہ اللہ was alluding to an incident which *Khatīb Al-Baghdādī* رحمہ اللہ has narrated in *Al-Jāmi’ li akhlāqir rawi wa ādābis sāmi*⁷. He mentions that *Abū Ja’far Aḥmad ibn Hamdān An-Nāīsābūrī* رحمہ اللہ had prepared a *mustakhraj*⁸ on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* which he used to teach to the congregation of his *maṣjid* in Iran between the *maghrib* and *‘ishā* prayers. His friend *Abū*

⁶ Vol. 14 Pg. 63

⁷ Vol. 1 Pg. 145

⁸ A *Mustakhraj* is a compilation in which the author mentions all the *Aḥādīth* of a specific book with his own *chains*.

‘*Uthmān Al-Ḥirī*, who himself was a great *imām*, also attended the lessons.

One particular night, *Abū ‘Uthmān* رضي الله عنه offered the ‘*ishā* prayer behind *Abū Ja’far* رضي الله عنه in *Naisābūr* whilst only wearing two pieces of cloth on his body, like a person in *ihrām* going for *hajj*. The son of *Abū Ja’far* رضي الله عنه enquired from his father: “Has *Abū ‘Uthmān* رضي الله عنه donned the *ihrām* for *hajj* or ‘*umrah*?” “No,” replied the father. “He is attending my lessons of *Al-Musnadus Ṣaḥīḥ* on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. It is his habit that whenever he learns something he did not adopt in the past, he immediately implements it within the following day or night. Tonight before ‘*ishā*, he heard that *Rasūlullāh* صلى الله عليه وسلم performed *salāh* in two pieces of cloth, so he wanted to practise this *sunnah* before the morning.”

Abū Ja’far رضي الله عنه relates regarding himself that once he was in the gathering of *Imām Abū Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Naṣr Al-Marwazī* رضي الله عنه when the time of *Zuhr* had entered. *Imām Muḥammad ibn Naṣr* رضي الله عنه stood up and called the *Adhān*. *Abū Ja’far* رضي الله عنه says “as I

was leaving the *Masjid*, *Muhammad ibn Nasr* ﷺ asked ‘where are you going?’ I replied that “I am going to perform ablution for *salāh*”. He remarked: “I expected better from you. How could you allow the time for *salāh* to enter and you do not have *wudu*?”⁹

One student had become the guest of *Imām Ahmad* ﷺ. Out of consideration for his guest, *Imām Ahmad* ﷺ had left some water near the guest room, so that when he wakes up for *tabajjud* (night prayer), he would find the water ready. The next morning the *Imām* was amazed to notice that the water was untouched. He exclaimed: “*Subhānallāh!* How can one seek knowledge and not have a routine of waking up for *salāh* at night?”¹⁰

⁹ *Al-Jami’ li akhlāqir rawi wa ādābis sāmi*’ vol. 1 Pg.143

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The Fifth Guideline

Adab (Respect)

The fifth guideline is *adab*. *Adab* in its general sense covers all aspects of *Islām*, those that are binding and even those that are voluntary. Amongst them are respect to ones parents as well as to all *Allāh's* ﷻ bondsmen and more so, the chosen slaves of *Allāh* ﷻ; the *Sahābah* ﷺ, and the scholars that are the flag bearers of *the shari'ah*.

The next guideline has a deep and close connection with this one. (And will therefore be discussed together).

The Sixth Guideline

Vigilance

The sixth guideline is that a student should be vigilant and alert in knowledge, by linking the new with the old i.e. by him assessing and evaluating his new findings with what he already knows. I generally encapsulate all this in one word, “*naqd*” (analysis/criticism).

These are two pillars that cannot be detached from one another;

a) respect in knowledge (*adab*) and **b)** criticism. What is meant by this is that a student should be sharp-minded. Whenever he comes across something new, he should link it with what he already knows on that subject. He should then assess between the two findings or quotations. If he feels it requires more research, he should patiently search and consult every book and reference he can lay his hands on so that he can reach a satisfactory conclusion. If he is able to

reconcile, then so be it. This is the method of the proficient *‘ulamā*. If the student is not fit for the above, then he should refer the matter to his reliable tutors and teachers in that particular field, irrespective of how trivial the matter may seem. If he does have the capability he could himself prefer one view over the other whilst relying upon solid and sufficient quotations of the *‘ulamā*. However, it is important that he always maintains the respect of the *‘ulamā* with whom he has differed.

It is the duty of students in situations such as these, to have *adab* (respect), *tahqīq* (verification), and *naqd* (the ability to criticise if need be). All should have equal balance. None should dominate the other.

There are two other groups of students that do not practise on the above. One are those who have such an overwhelming level of respect for the person whose view they are reading that they do not analyse what they are reading. Such people will never successfully acquire pristine authentic knowledge.

The other group are those who are overcome with the habit of criticism and condemnation. These are the ones who (unfortunately) are culprits of encroachment and disrespect of the *a'immah*.

وَكِلَا طَرَفِي قَصْدِ الْأُمُورِ ذَمِيمٌ

“Both sides of moderation are despised.”

A true student is one who is vigilant, aware and is able to compare the issues with the intellect of a bright scholar and the respect of an honest level-headed *‘ālim*. In so doing, he will fulfil the right of knowledge as well as the right of the people of knowledge. If he is too respectful (to the extent that he cannot criticise when need be), he will slip up and not reach the proper conclusion. If he prefers to be too critical he will fail in the duty of every Muslim towards the scholars. (The duty of respecting them).

The Seventh Guideline

Caution and Verification

The seventh guideline is that a student should be cautious in all his affairs. He should be careful of what he reads, memorises and how he understands the texts and terms. This should be his habit in all the issues of knowledge that he quotes verbally or in writing.

From amongst the words the *muhaddithūn* use to justify and praise a narrator is that they say: “so and so is *thabt*” which is explained by the linguist as, “*one who verifies and is cautious in his affairs*”. This would mean that when he is unsure about a particular verse of the noble *Qurān* that he had memorised or he has a hesitation when quoting a view or statement, he pauses and does not present that quotation. Rather he refers to the sources like the noble *Qurān* or his notes in which he had recorded that issue. Only after precise verification does he quote it.

A student who is cautious in what he studies actually lays the foundation for the stages that then follow, like memorising, understanding, teaching, correcting, compiling and giving *fatwā* etc.

These points are generally discussed by the scholars in chapters that are dedicated to highlight the grave mistakes and distortions that occur when caution is omitted. There are several laughable incidents of this kind too. Amongst them are the following:

- 1) The authors of the famous four *sunan* have recorded a narration wherein *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ prohibited from forming circles in the *Masjid* on the day of *jumu'ah*. The Arabic word الحَلَق (al-*hilaq*) is what appears in the *ḥadīth* and is translated as circles. *Imām Khattābī* رحمه الله in his commentary to *Abū Dawūd*, entitled: “*Ma‘ālimus sunan*” writes: “One of my *ustādhs* used to mispronounce this word as الحَلَق (al-*halq*) which translates as: “to shave” (which results in the

misunderstanding that *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ prohibited from shaving one's hair on Fridays). He (my teacher) told us that for forty years he never shaved his hair on a Friday before the *Jumu'ah ṣalah*. I (Imam Khattabi) told him that the actual word is الحَلَق (al-*hilaq*) to form circles. He was very pleased by this and after acknowledging his mistake made *du'ā* for me. He was also a very pious person. May Allah ﷻ have mercy on him”.

- 2) *Imām Abū Aḥmad Al-Askarī* رحمه الله has recorded in his book, *Tas-hifātul Muhaddithīn*¹¹ and in his other book titled, *Sharḥ ma waqa'a fī hit tas-hīf wat tahrīf*¹² that one of the narrators of *ḥadīth* (whose knowledge was merely restricted to the narrating of *ḥadīth* and not its understanding), once narrated a *ḥadīth*

¹¹ Vol.1 pg. 14

¹² Pg.7

*qudsi*¹³ in the following manner: “He said: from *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ, who reports from *Jibrīl* ﷺ, who reports from *Allāh* ﷻ, who narrates from a certain man.” Somebody commented: “Who is this person who is suitable to be the *ustādh* of *Allāh* ﷻ? When the book was checked, it was realized that he misread the text. It was actually: “from *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ, who reports from *Jibrīl* ﷺ, who reports from *Allāh* عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. (He misread عَزَّ وَجَلَّ as عَنْ رَجُلٍ. This would be better understood by those who know Arabic.)

The safest method of protecting oneself from such ugly mistakes is to accompany reliable scholars, and acquire knowledge from them. It is for this reason that the former *‘ulamā* used to advise students that: “Don’t acquire knowledge from one who is self-educated and neither learn the noble *Qurān* from such a person.” Highlighting its relevance, *Imām Al-*

¹³ A *Hadith Qudsi* is one in which *Rasulullāh* ﷺ explicitly attributes the text to *Allāh Ta’ālā*. (Translator)

Askarī ﷺ actually commences his book, *Tas-hifātul Muḥadithīn* with the above mentioned statement.

When a student passes this stage and becomes capable of studying and researching by himself, then to ensure that he maintains caution in his knowledge and in what he quotes or writes, it is important that he adheres to two things:

- 1) He should always refer to original classical sources. The further back in time he goes, the closer he will get to the clear source of knowledge and research. With the exception of a few latter day *‘ulamā* who, despite being from the latter eras, resemble the earlier day scholars in the level of their knowledge and immaculate research. It is imperative for a student to refer to such books for reliable quotations and verdicts (*fatāwā*).
- 2) He should constantly refer to the source from which a particular author may be

quoting, even if the author is from those whom I have mentioned above, i.e. they resemble the earlier scholars in their immaculate research.

This in fact is the application of the previous two guidelines (the fifth and the sixth),

- *adab* (respect) by maintaining due reliance upon the books of our *a'immah* and
- *naqd* (criticism) by us referring to the books from which they quote for the purpose of verification.

This will lead us to various useful outcomes. Amongst them are the following:

- 1) Convincing proofs of the high standard of our *a'immah* and their accuracy in **what** they quote and **whom** they quote from.
- 2) Verification of any inaccuracy which some of them may have committed whilst citing a quotation. For example, if there were a

thousand quotations in the book of any author which I wish to annotate (do *tahqīq* of) and whilst doing so, I proceeded to verify each of them and if it comes to light that he erred in two or three of his quotations, I would be serving the author as well as practically proving his lofty standards and the accuracy in his quotes and rulings. In addition, I would be providing an academic service to knowledge and *Dīn* by correcting those two or three misquotations. I would also be providing the students of knowledge with a book which is filled with quotations that are reliable and verified. This in itself is a great achievement.

The Eighth Guideline

Keep to the Majority

The eighth guideline is that a student should ensure that he sticks to the view of the overwhelming majority of *‘ulamā* and that he distances himself from the isolated or uncommon views, forsaking them totally just as our *‘ulamā* used to do. I do not mean that we should be searching for those issues on which the majority are unanimous. It is very rare for them all to concur on one view only. The motive here is that, for instance, on a particular issue there may be a different view by each of the four *imāms*. Each of these four is backed by other scholars of the past who concur with them in their respective viewpoints. There may also exist one or two scholars who have a fifth viewpoint which is in contrast to what all the others have said. In such a situation, it is binding upon a student that he keeps to the view point of the four *imāms* and those that backed them, and that he

abandons the fifth view which goes against the majority.

This is a huge mistake that is often committed by students of our era. Rather, as a result of the present academic disarray, this practice actually **appeals** to many of them! Listen to the words of the great *imām* and *mujtahid* who lived in the early period of Islām, *Imām Awzāʿī* رحمته الله :

مَنْ أَخَذَ بِنَوَادِرِ الْعُلَمَاءِ خَرَجَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ

*“One who accepts the isolated views of the scholars
will eventually leave Islam.”*

Imām Awzāʿī رحمته الله passed away in 157 A.H. An era which was filled with great personalities and many *tābiʿūn*, of which some might have had certain isolated views. Despite their position, this is the effect he foresaw in following such remote views.

Imām Sulaymān At-Taymī رحمته الله who lived in an era earlier than *Imām Awzāʿī* رحمته الله says:

لَوْ أَخَذْتَ بِرُخْصَةِ كُلِّ عَالِمٍ اجْتَمَعَ فِيكَ الشَّرُّ كُلُّهُ

“If you accept the (isolated) concessions of every scholar, in you would be every evil.”

After quoting this statement, the great *muhaddīth* of Spain, *Imām ibn ‘Abdil Barr* رحمه الله writes: “This is a unanimous and accepted fact regarding which I am unaware of any difference of opinion.”

In the book, *Tabaqātush Shāfi‘iyyatul Kubrā*, after citing some isolated views that were held by certain illustrious scholars, the author, *Tājuddīn As-Subkī* رحمه الله then quotes a statement of a great *imām* of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, *Imām Abū ‘Alī Karābīsī* رحمه الله who said: “If somebody claims that the proponents of such isolated views are sometimes respected scholars, he will be told, the only real cause of the destruction of Islām would be the mistake of a respected *‘ālim* whereas a thousand mistakes of a *jāhil* (non-*‘ālim*) would not affect Islām in the least. Historically there have been

several people of knowledge who propounded views that were impermissible in Islām. For example, the famous Judge, *Qādī Shurayh*, passed certain verdicts which were not acceptable to anyone, which have no basis whatsoever, neither in the noble *Qurān*, the *ḥadīth*, or the views of the *ṣaḥabah* ﷺ or *ṭabiʿīn* ﷺ.”

If somebody studied the biography of *Qādī Shurayh*, he would understand him to be Islām’s second best judge of all times. (The first being *Sayyidunā ʿAlī* ﷺ who received the title of being the best judge amongst the *Ṣaḥabah* from none other than *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ himself.)

Despite the position of *Qādī Shurayh* ﷺ, see what *Imām Al-Karābīsī* ﷺ said regarding some of his verdicts. Therefore, it is not permissible for one who clings to a weak, isolated view to justify his stance against us by saying that this is the view of such and such a scholar who is an *imām*, *ḥujjah* (proof) and a *muṭtahid* etc, for our response would be that such and such an *imām* and tens or hundreds like him have opposed him by forsaking his view all together!

Since a student should beware of adopting the view of one or two people which is in contrary with the vast majority of Islām, it is even more important that he guards himself against another even more drastic and grave offence. That is to appoint one or two scholars as arbitrators over the vast majority of Islām, thereby habitually adopting the view of these one or two whilst abandoning as well as insulting everyone besides them.

So the first precaution should be against resorting to the view of one or two scholars which oppose the majority for the sole purpose of suiting one's worldly needs at the expense of one's *Dīn*, or for no other reason but to create concessions for one's self or anybody else...

The second precaution should be against one surrendering the steering of his knowledge to one or two scholars whose every view he adopts and defends, thereby forsaking the view of the vast majority of the *ʿulamā* of the *ummah* who may even number up to several hundreds or even thousands. This modus

operandi (approach) is academically and logically improper.

Parting Advice

After excusing myself for taking much of your time, I would like to end my speech with some advice which I will present in brief.

1) Every student or the guardian of the student should ensure that he memorises the noble *Qurān* at a very early stage in life. This needs to be taken seriously.

2) Due importance should also be given to memorising the noble *ahādīth* of *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ. This should be done from a book, **not from lectures and talks.**

A book I suggest is *Riyāḍus Sālihīn* of *Imām Al-Nawawī* (The gardens of the pious). This book is in the true sense, a garden for the pious. All its chapters pertain to practical aspects of a Muslim's life. Furthermore, the author who was an expert in

Hadīth, has guaranteed in his foreword that all the narrations are *Sahīh* (authentic).

Thereafter one can progress to others like *Taysīrul Wusūl*, etc.

3) Proper qualified teachers should select for the student one concise textbook for memorisation in the various subjects. One for *nahw* (syntax) like the *Alfiyyah*, one textbook on the *fiqh* (jurisprudence) of his *madh-hab*, one concerning the *ūsūl* (principles) of his *madh-hab*, one in the field of *aqīdah* (doctrine), etc.

The reason for me emphasising upon memorisation is that the noble *Qurān* and the *Sunnah* are in essence those things which a student will rely upon throughout his life. When he intends to deliver a *Jumu'ah* sermon or any other lecture, he would then be frantically searching for an *āyah* or two and a few *āḥadīth* to quote in his lecture. If he is suddenly confronted with a situation in an informal gathering

where he needs to quote a certain *āyah* or *ḥadīth* as support, he would be forced (due to his inaccuracy and hesitance) to then say:

أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

“This is something similar to what Allāh ﷻ mentioned.”

This is not permissible!

Or he may say:

أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

“This is something similar to what Rasūlullāh ﷺ mentioned.”

which is only permissible if he accurately passed on the meaning. These two noble sources are his actual supports in his academic life.

As for the student memorizing textbooks of other subjects, these will also prove to be great aids for him in his life. It will allow him to easily quote the various rules and regulations from memory. It is natural for people to be able to retain information when they have memorized it, whether it be in the form of text

or poetry. For example, if an Arabic language teacher is asked about the situation in which the *hamzah* of *inna* takes a *kasrah* and those where it takes a *fathah*, it would be difficult for him to enumerate all of them unless he has memorised that from a book like the *Alfiyyah* of *Ibn Mālik*.

The huge amount of textbooks that were written by our *a'immah* (leaders in knowledge) in the various subjects of knowledge were not done in vain, or for them to fill up their free time (*na 'udhu billāh*). Rather, it was a method which they adopted while implanting knowledge in the rising generation so that it may remain with them till their graves.

4) Every student should frequently sit in the company of *'ulamā* as well as study by them the various reliable books on the basic subjects like the Arabic language and its branches, *fiqh* and its principles, etc. Thereafter, he should choose to study books of those subjects in which he wishes to

specialise. One should never suffice with self study directly from the books. There is an ancient saying:

لَا تَحْمِلِ الْعِلْمَ عَنْ صَاحِبِيٍّ وَلَا تَأْخُذِ الْقُرْآنَ عَنْ مُصْحَفِيٍّ

Don't acquire knowledge from one who is self studied

And neither should you learn Quran from one who has no teacher


Importantly this advice should be adhered to in light of the next one.

5) One should carefully choose his tutors. This one stems from the statement of the illustrious *tābi'ī*, *Muhammad ibn Sīrīn* رحمته الله :

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ دِينٌ فَانْظُرُوا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَ دِينَكُمْ

“Undoubtedly knowledge is an integral part of religion.

Therefore, be careful as to whom you accept your religion/knowledge from”

A student undoubtedly has no choice in choosing a teacher for the various subjects during his secular studies. He is therefore forced to attend the various lessons of teachers that may even be against his choice. As for his personal study and him acquiring knowledge from one particular *ustādh*, this is where he has complete freedom of choice and should therefore adhere to this directive of *Imām Ibn Sīrīn* .

6) No matter how much a student progresses in the field of knowledge, he should constantly remain in contact with his illustrious teachers, more so those in whom he has confidence. He should refer his academic objections to them. He should never rely on himself or feel it difficult to confide in someone else.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the audio *Shaykh* (may *Allāh* protect him) quoted the example of *Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh* where he waited three months to verify one diacritical point (dot on a letter). For this he also referred to his seniors and didn’t suffice on his personal research. It was the word: الإخالة which *shaykh* later ascertained to actually be: الإخالة.

7) Lastly, I offer the following directive with a bit of hesitancy. My only motive here is: the love for good counsel, and sympathy to my fellow brethren; the students of knowledge.

As the Arabic saying goes:

النُّصْحُ أَغْلَى مَا يُبَاعُ وَهُوَ هَبْ

“Good counsel is the greatest gift / commodity.”

Every student should choose one or more mentors under whose attention his personal spirituality can be nurtured. For undoubtedly we all have seen and realised that the methods of nurturing adopted by the (Islāmic) universities have not produced anything fruitful¹⁵. We have indeed seen with our own eyes as

¹⁵ *Shaykh*, in the audio commenced this point with the following statement: “I have lived in the era when knowledge was studied in the *Masājid* from spiritually strong teachers. I have also seen the era (like the present) where knowledge is sought in Universities. The difference between two is extremely vast! **The expected results will never be achieved** if a student does not have a bond with those devout scholars who studied by (and were nurtured by) other righteous

well as our hearts that the graduates of the universities hardly ever produce anything fruitful for the *ummah* unless they have a strong spiritual and cultured bond with a pious, practising, scholarly *‘ālim*. Or else the only objective then seemingly becomes the acquisition of some qualification followed by employment.

The *ummah* at large will never successfully find an *‘ālim* who is proficient and suitable for issuing *fatwās* and solving its complications, one who would be capable of successfully passing on the trust of knowledge to the next generation unless he is one who is linked to the *‘ulamā* before him, who are also linked with those above them until this transmission of legacy links up to *Rasūlullāh* ﷺ.

Closing du‘ā

teachers in the masjid, in a humble environment, while sitting on the floor etc.

We ask *Allāh*¹⁶ ﷻ, The Noble, to make us amongst them and from those who assist and love them. Indeed He is the custodian of all good.

(Shaykh) Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah
Al-Madīnatul Munawwarrah

¹⁶ In conclusion Shaykh also quoted the Hadith in which *Rasulullāh* (*sallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*) said: “*Allāh* will always create people in this ummat whom He will use for his obedience” We ask *Allāh* to honour us by including us among these selected ones.



About the Author

The eminent Islāmic-scholar *Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah* was born on the 1st of January 1940 in Aleppo.

Before he commenced his studies in the year 1953, he used to attend the lessons of *Shaykh Muḥammād As-Salqīni*. From the very beginning he was the student of *Shaykh Abdullah Sirājuddīn* رحمته الله. In the year 1378 A.H. (1957) he became the student of *Shaykh Abdul-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah* رحمته الله. He was eventually considered as the most preferred and exceptional student of both these great personalities.

He enrolled in the Islāmic Shari‘ah faculty in the year 1382 A.H. (1961). In the same year, he was appointed as a teacher and librarian at *Madrasah Sha’bāniyyah*,

which was the institute of his *Shaykh* and teacher, *Shaykh Abdullah Sirājuddīn* رحمته الله There he taught numerous subjects until 1400 A.H. (1979/80) when he left Syria. He also was in charge of the administration of the *madrasah* for some time.

In the month of *Safar* of the year 1379 AH, (1958) he travelled to Egypt, where he met many great and outstanding *‘ulamā*.

Amongst them are:

- *Shaykh Ahmad ibnus Siddīq Al-Ghumārī* رحمته الله
- *Shaykh Abdullah ibnus Siddīq Al-Ghumārī* رحمته الله
- *Shaykh Abdul-Wahhāb Abdul-Latīf* رحمته الله
- *Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Zabrah* رحمته الله

He is gifted with distinct academic power and evident extraordinary qualities. The people of Aleppo had high regard for him and they considered him equal in rank to his teachers.

While still in his youth, he was appointed as a teacher at the *Masjid Ar-Rawdah*, which was at that time considered to be a prime seat of learning.

His *Shaykh* and teacher, *Abdul-Fattah Abū Ghuddah* رحمته الله has said with regards to him:

“My student of yesterday and comrade of today.”

He also praised him as:

“A great scholar and researcher.”

Shaykh ‘Awwāmah emigrated to *Madinah Munawwarah* in the year 1400 A.H. (1980) Here he joined the Islāmic university, where he established the faculty of academic research, which is today called:

“مركز خدمة السنة و السيرة النبوية”.

*Centre for the service of the traditions and
biography of the Prophet ﷺ.*

His first research was on the book “إتحاف المهرة” (a volumous book of *ḥadīth*.)

In the year 1406 A.H. (1986), he established a bureau for the research of Islāmic literature. For 12 years, he also served the publishing house of *Dārul Qiblah*.

He is a person of brilliant focus, ideas and an advocator of sublime methodologies. This is apparent in his two books:

أثر الحديث الشريف في اختلاف الأئمة الفقهاء

*Atharul ḥadithish sharīf fi ikhtilāfil a'immatil fuqahā*¹⁷

and: أدب الاختلاف في مسائل العلم و الدين

*Adabul ikhtilāf fi masā'ilil 'ilm wad dīn*¹⁸.

¹⁷ Which translates as: "The role of *ḥadith* in the differences amongst the jurists."

¹⁸ Which Translates as: "Respect in difference of opinion in the issues of Knowledge and Deen."

الجرح و His methods with regards to the science of التعديل (the validation of the narrators of hadith) are so unique, critical and foresighted, that they are examples for us to follow.

He is a distinguished authority in the field of research. The famous *Shaykh* and *Allāmah Muḥammad Saʿīd At-Tantāwī* رحمته الله said with regards to him:

“I know none upon the surface of the earth, who is more knowledgeable in the field of research than him.”

His publications thus far are as follows:

1. أثر الحديث الشريف في اختلاف الأئمة الفقهاء

Atharul ḥadithish sharīf fī ikhtilāfil aʿimmatil fuqahā

2. أدب الاختلاف في مسائل العلم والدين

Adabul ikhtilāf fi masā'ilil 'ilm wad dīn

These two books are translated in some languages and are also taught in some universities.

3. مسند عمر بن عبد العزيز للباغندي

He annotated and explained its *Aḥādīth* together with a supplement of additional narrations.

4. الأنساب للسمعاني

He researched a portion of it.

5. تقريب التهذيب

by *Hafiz ibn Hajar* رحمه الله together with the foot notes of 'Allamah 'Abdullāh Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله and his student *Al-Mirghanī* رحمه الله .

6. الكاشف للذهبي

including the footnotes of *Sabt ibn A'jamī* ﷺ along with a detailed introduction and critical analysis of certain aspects in 5 volumes.

7. مجالس ابن ناصر الدين

of *Hāfiẓ ibn Nāsirudīn Ad-Dimashqī* ﷺ in which the author expounded on the commentary of one single verse of the noble *Qurān*.

8. من صحاح الأحاديث القدسية This book consists of one hundred *Aḥādīth-Qudsī*¹⁹, with their references and commentary.

9. المختار من فرائد النقول و الأخبار A book comprising of many inspiring incidents which serve as guidelines for every student.

¹⁹ A *Hadīth Qudsī* is one in which Rasullullāh ﷺ explicitly attributes the text to *Allāh Ta'ālā* directly.

10. القول البديع by *Allāmah As-Sakhāwī* رحمه الله . This annotated version is considered to be the most complete and (authentic) one.
11. السنن of *Imām Abū Dawūd* رحمه الله in 6 volumes.
He annotated this celebrated compilation of *ḥadīth* from eight manuscripts, one of them being the personal copy of *Hāfīz ibn Hajar*.
12. الشرائع المحمدية of *Imām Tirmidhī* رحمه الله together with the commentary of *Allāmah Al-Bājūrī* رحمه الله .
13. المصنف of *Ibn Abī Shaybah* رحمه الله . A volumous and priceless work on *ḥadīth*, which took sixteen years to complete. He researched and sourced every *ḥadīth* and also commented on them. It is printed in 26 volumes.

14. دراسة حديثية a detailed study and in depth analysis of the great *Hanaḥī* collection of *Hadīth*: *Nasbur rāyah* as well as *Fathul Qadīr*, *sharhul Hidāyah*.

Most of the above mentioned books have been repeatedly reprinted. His habit has been to refine the new editions and not to merely re-print a verbatim copy of the previous edition.

In all his researched books, he endeavours to acquire the personal copies of the respective authors. *Allāh ﷻ* has made this possible for him in the majority of them. This also contributes to the uniqueness of his works.

Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah became famous through his introductions of his researched books. These introductions generally serve as a critical yet fruitful and academic analysis of the book at hand.

He is engaged in the service of knowledge and its seekers for the past fifty years. Despite his illnesses, he continues to do so with astounding loyalty in *Madīnah Munawwarah*. May Allāh ﷻ grant the respected *shaykh* good health, a pleasant lengthy life and safety from all evil and calamities. May He also continue to benefit the *ummah* with his priceless wisdom. (*Āmīn*)²⁰

²⁰ This brief introduction was prepared by the *Shaykh*'s son, *Shaykh Muhyuddīn* and presented at the "*Ithnayniyyah*" seminar.