

A Treatise on Calling to Allah

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Introduction [1]:

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and repent to Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our selves and from our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, Who has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger; may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, his family and Companions, and those who follow them rightly until the Day of Judgment.

To proceed:

Calling to Allah is a prestigious endeavor and a refined rank because it was filled by the chosen ones of Allah's creation of the honorable messengers and their rightly-guided caliphs who succeeded them in realizing, implementing, and advocating the truth. So, it is our duty to give this endeavor our best efforts and strive for it duly with sincerity to Allah and following therein the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) so as to crown our endeavor with the pleasure and acceptance of Allah.

The following are a few words I prepared for this gathering and arranged them in the following chapters:

Chapter One: The obligation of calling to Allah, and explaining its merits.

Chapter Two: Means and manner of calling to Allah.

Chapter Three: The field of calling to Allah.

Chapter Four: The proper traits and behavior of the caller to Allah.

Chapter Five: Causes of success in calling to Allah.

And Allah is the Source of Strength

Written by the Author

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Chapter One

The obligation of calling to Allah, and explaining its merits

Calling to Allah Almighty is a call of goodness and truth because it is essentially a call for justice and kindness, a call for what is required by sound nature, sincere minds, and pure souls.

It is a call to faith in Allah Almighty and to every sound belief that the heart finds comfort and joy in.

It is a call to affirm the Oneness of Allah in His Lordship, His Worship, and His Names and Attributes.

It is a call to have an unshakable belief that He is One in His Lordship without a partner; there is no creator nor an absolute disposer of affairs in this universe except Allah, alone.

By virtue of this unshakable belief, the heart becomes detached from any other than Allah Almighty, and one fears none but Allah, has hope in none but Him, and relies on none but Him.

It is a call to have an unshakable belief that there is no judge over people or between them except Allah alone with regard to the fates He decreed and the laws He revealed. By virtue of this unshakable belief, resorting to any law other than the law of Allah is invalid, and any judgment in conflict with that of Allah and His Messenger is disregarded, because any such conflicting judgment is a form of oppression and falsehood that leads to corruption of nations and people.

{But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who are certain in faith.} [Al-Mā'idah: 50]

By this unshakable belief, people submit to the legal rulings of Allah and comply with them in the manner legislated by Allah whether or not it conforms with their desires. Likewise, they submit to the destiny decreed by Allah, which will inevitably befall them, while they are in submission to it, whether or not they are pleased with it. {So is it other than the religion of Allah they desire, while to Him have submitted all those within the heavens and earth, willingly or by compulsion, and to Him they will be returned?} [Āl-'Imrān: 83]

The call to Allah Almighty is a call to the worship of Allah alone, out of faith and certitude that none is worthy of worship but Him; not an angel, not a prophet, not a saint, and not any other, because Allah, alone, is the Creator, thus He must be the only one worshipped.

Calling to Allah is a call to the unshakable belief in all the Names and Attributes established for Allah Almighty in the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and that all of them are true attributes authentically established for Him in a manner most

befitting of Him without distorting their meaning, denying them, asking how, or drawing similarities between Allah and His creation; {There is nothing like unto Him: He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.} [Al-Shūra: 11]

Calling to Allah Almighty is a call to follow the straight path; the path of whomever Allah has bestowed favor upon of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous; the path that Allah set for His servants to reach Him and by which their religious and worldly affairs are set aright.

Following that straight path cuts off the paths of heresies whose followers exchange accusations of deviation, divert away from the religion of Allah, and follow commands that Allah has not mandated; Allah Almighty said: {And, moreover, this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow other ways, for you will be separated from His way. This is what He has instructed you that you may become righteous.} [Al-An'ām: 53] And they will fall into the very separation that Allah prohibited them from. Allah Almighty says: {He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you [O Muhammad] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein.} [Al-Shūra: 13] Calling to Allah Almighty is a call to noble manners, good deeds, upholding rights, establishing justice among people by paying people their due rights and their rightful merit. Thus, brotherhood and friendliness among believers are achieved, total security and a perfect system are established within the framework of the Sharia of Allah Almighty, and all deprecated morals, wicked deeds, non-religious systems generated by man-made laws and false creeds shall wane, to the humiliation of all those who followed them and called for them and wished to divert people from the path of Allah to them. Due to the above reasons and plenty more that help secure the interests of Muslims and fend off evils, calling to Allah Almighty has gained a very prestigious position in Islam. Those engaged in it have become the heirs of the honorable messengers in this regard. There are many textual proofs in the Qur'an and Sunnah that command Muslims to perform it and show its merit: Allah Almighty says to His Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): {For every religious community We have appointed rites which they perform. So let them not contend with you over the matter but invite them to your Lord. Indeed, you are upon straight guidance.} [Al-Hajj: 67]

Allah Almighty says: {And never let them avert you from the verses of Allah after they have been revealed to you. And invite people to your Lord. And never be of those who associate others with Allah.} [Al-Qasas: 87]

Allah Almighty also said: {He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Prophet] and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back to Him. And they did not become divided until after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And if not for a decree that preceded from your Lord postponing the penalty until a specified time, it would have been concluded between them. And indeed, those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are in disquieting doubt concerning it. So to that religion of Allah invite and remain on a right course as you are commanded and do not follow their inclinations but say, "I have believed in what Allah has revealed of the scripture and I have been commanded to do justice among you.} [Al-Shūra: 13-15]

And He said: {And let there be a community arising from you inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful. And do not be like those who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And they will have a great punishment.} [Āl-'Imrān: 104-105]

{And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says: "Indeed, I am of the Muslims.}" [Fussilat: 33]

Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) dispatched Mu'ādh to Yemen and commanded him to invite them to Islam, prayer, and Zakat. [Al-Bukhāri and Muslim] Sahl ibn Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) told 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (may Allah be pleased with him) on the day of the battle of Khaybar: "Proceed to them steadily and do not hurry till you enter their land. Then, call them to Islam, and inform them of what is enjoined upon them, for, by Allah, if Allah guides even one man through you, it will be better for you than possessing red camels." [Al-Bukhāri and Muslim]

Tamīm ibn Aws al-Dāri (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Religion is sincerity/sincere advice." We said: "To whom?" He said: "To Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the Muslim leaders, and to the general body of Muslims." [Muslim]

Calling to Allah Almighty is a form of sincerity to Allah Almighty.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever calls to guidance shall receive a reward similar to that received by those who follow him without that diminishing anything from their rewards. And whoever calls to misguidance shall incur a sin similar to that incurred by those who follow him without that diminishing anything from their sins." [Muslim]

The above verses and Hadiths indicate the obligation of calling to Allah Almighty and its merit, given its consequences of conveying and preserving the religion of Allah, securing great interests for people in this life and in the afterlife, and fending off serious evils from them if they were to concede and embrace them; and Allah is the One guiding to success.

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Chapter Two

Section two: Means and manner of calling to Allah.

By the means of calling to Allah, I refer to the method used by the Muslim preacher to convey his message. They are of three kinds, and each kind has a distinctive advantage:

First kind:

Direct oral communication: the preacher meets and addresses the audience face to face. He explains to them the truth of what he is calling them to, its merit, and its present and promised good fruits.

The advantage of this kind is that the preacher recognizes the extent of the acceptance of his audience through their facial reaction and thus can interact with them in accordance with their state. In addition, he becomes capable of conversing with them until he secures their acceptance and conviction. This method is more effective than the next two.

Second kind:

Indirect oral communication: such as that transmitted over the radio.

The advantage of this kind is that it covers a larger audience and reaches places that direct oral communication cannot reach.

Third kind:

Writing through authorship and publishing in newspapers, magazines, signboards, and other appropriate mediums.

The advantage of this kind is that it enables the audience to read the preached content time after time and contemplate its merits and fruits.

As for the content to be preached, it differs according to the addressed recipient; there are three types thereof:

First: a recipient who desires good and seeks it but he might fail to recognize it. In this case, the simplest form of preaching is sufficient.

For example, he could be told: this was commanded by Allah and His Messenger, so do it; or: this was prohibited by Allah and His Messenger, so avoid it.

Because he seeks to do good, he will accept and obey.

Second type: the recipient is just lazy and reluctant to do good or he has a desire to do evil.

In this case, the simple form of preaching would not be sufficient and must be complemented with good exhortation by endearing acts of goodness and obedience to him, explaining the merit of doing that and its good consequences, and offering him some examples of it. He should also be given good exhortation by warning him against evil and disobedience, explaining the sin incurred thereby and its evil consequences, and offering him examples of the bad consequences for the disobedient: {Then the end of those who did evil was the worst consequence because they denied the signs of Allah and used to ridicule them.} [Al-Rūm: 10]

Third type: the recipient is avert to good deeds while engaging in evil deeds, and argues to defend his conduct.

In this case, neither the simplest form of preaching nor good exhortation is sufficient; they must be supported by gracious argumentation to explicate the truth in the best manner so as to refute his argument and expose its erroneousness.

Allah Almighty refers to the above three types in the following verse: {Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation, and argue with them in a way that is best...} [Al-Nahl: 125]

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"People are of three types: one who acknowledges the truth and follows it, and that is the one with wisdom; one who acknowledges the truth but does not work upon it, and he should be given exhortation

until he works upon it; and one who does not acknowledge the truth, and he should be argued with in a gracious manner. Generally speaking, argumentation may cause anger, so if it is done in a gracious manner, it is expected to achieve the maximum benefit, just like repelling the intruder.”

After gracious argumentation, if the recipient of preaching does not acknowledge the truth, follow it, and submit to it, we move to the next step:

The fourth type: which Allah Almighty refers to in the following verse: {And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them} [Al-‘Ankabūt: 46]

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy upon him) commented: “[Those who commit injustice] are the ones who deviated from the truth and are blind of the clear path, and they acted stubbornly and arrogantly. In this case, one should move from argumentation to physical encounter, and they are to be fought in a manner that fends them off and deters them.”

This last case is probably not the duty of someone who is not in power, because if such action is taken by individuals who are not in power, it will cause chaos and create significant harm and damage.

The above is the manner of preaching as far as tailoring its content is concerned; what is taken into consideration is the condition of the recipient in terms of his preparedness to accept it or reject it.

As for the manner of preaching in terms of prioritizing what is preached, then the preacher should start with what is most important and with the fundamental principles that serve as introductions to what follows. The preacher should move gradually from one level to another.

For example, if we want to call someone who denies the existence of the Creator – to recognize Him, worship Him, and follow His Messenger; we begin with proving the existence of the Creator through providing rational proofs as well as tangible examples that prove the existence of the Creator so that the denier recognize and affirm that Allah is the sole Creator without a partner. Next step is to prove to him the Oneness of Allah and the obligation of worshiping Him, because admission of the Lordship of Allah entails belief in His Oneness in terms of worthiness to be worshiped. For this reason, the latter is a resultant of the former in many verses of the Qur’an; Allah Almighty says: {O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you} [Al-Baqarah: 21] Allah Almighty disapproves the actions of those who associate with Him others who do not create anything; He says: {Do they associate with Him those who create nothing and they themselves are created?} [Al-A‘rāf: 191] He also says: {But they have taken besides Him gods which create nothing, while they are created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit and possess not [power to cause] death or life or resurrection.} [Al-Furqān: 3] The next step is to guide him to the path of worship and show him the obligation of treading this path, as it is the path of the messengers whom Allah Almighty sent to the creation. He supported them with signs so that they may teach people what benefits them from the affairs of the unseen and clarify to them how to worship Allah Almighty because it is the right of Allah Almighty that He obligated upon His servants to observe in the manner that pleases Him. They would not have known this manner except through the messengers. So, if the recipient admits that there must be a path for the worship of Allah that can only be known through the messengers, the preacher may now proceed to the next more specific step. That is, he should show him the specific path he must follow, namely, the path of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah, the Qurashite Hashimite Messenger, who was sent to all mankind. We lay out to him the signs that prove it and that belief in him implies believing in the messengers who preceded him but not the other way round. Once he admits this, we then move to a detailed explanation of the Shariah brought forth by the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) so that he abides by it. In this process, however, we should begin with the most important and then the less important; such as prayer then Zakah...etc.

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Chapter Three

The field of Calling to Allah

By the field of calling to Allah, I am referring to its various arenas, as it is not limited to a specific arena but includes various ones such as:

- 1- Personal communications: the preacher approaches a certain individual and calls him to Allah in accordance with the manner explained in Chapter Two in terms of content and priorities.
- 2- Public places: such as mosques and gatherings like the Hajj season, clubs, coffee shops, restaurants, and similar locations, in a manner he sees best and needed. That was the reason why the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) used to approach the various tribes during the seasonal gatherings and marketplaces to call them to Allah Almighty. Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him) narrated on the authority of Abu Rabī‘ah ibn ‘Abbād al-Dayli that he saw the Prophet (may Allah’s

peace and blessings be upon him) in the marketplace of Dhil al-Majāz saying: "O people say 'there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah,' you shall succeed." Jābir ibn 'Abdullah narrated that during the Hajj season, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would present himself and say: "Which man will bring me to his people? For indeed Quraysh has prevented me from conveying the Word of my Lord, Exalted and Glorified." Ibn Kathīr said: "This Hadīth was narrated by the four authors of the collections of Sunan." Al-Tirmidhi said that this Hadīth is sound and authentic. Ibn Ishāq said: "Whenever the tribes attended the seasonal gatherings, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) would approach them and invite them to believe in Allah Almighty and to embrace Islam. He would present himself to them and what he had brought forth of guidance and mercy. There is not a single Arab of prestige and status who came to Makkah except that he approached him and invited him to believe in Allah and presented Islam to him." 3- Educational venues: such as institutions, schools, and universities; whether delivered through lectures, public seminars, or private lessons. A teacher who is sincere to his religion can call to Allah Almighty by speaking during his classes or by his behavior manifested in his observation of acts of worship and well-mannered interaction with others. The teacher is a role model for his students; his actions and manners are imprinted in their minds and appear in their actions and manners.

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Chapter Four

The proper traits and behavior of a preacher

The position of a preacher is a critical one and he should give it its due value and care. To accomplish this, he should take the following into consideration:

1- Sincerity to Allah Almighty in his deeds

such that he engages in this endeavor of preaching with the intention of drawing closer to Allah Almighty, supporting His religion, and reforming His servants by extracting them out of the darkness of ignorance and disobedience to the light of knowledge and obedience. His preaching should stem from his love for Allah and for His religion and for the love of good for all mankind.

Sincere preaching, coupled with determination and reliance on Allah, must influence and leave an impact. Do you not see the story of Moses (peace be upon him) when all the people assembled in the forenoon on the day of their festival to compete with him. The Pharaoh put together a scheme and came out in his grandeur, power, and arrogance. Moses told them: {Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah or He will exterminate you with a punishment; and he who fabricates lies has failed.} [Taha: 61] What did these words do? They created separation in their front and caused them to disunite instantly; {So they disputed over their affair among themselves} [Tāha: 62] Dispute is the foremost cause of failure and loss of strength, as Allah Almighty says: {do not dispute thus you will lose courage and will depart your strength} [Al-Anfāl: 46] The sincerity of the preacher is a key factor for his success therein and for receiving the reward for it. But if his intention is to show off or if he desires a worldly objective such as wealth, prestige, or a high position, his deed will be nullified and would not yield any significant success. Allah Almighty says: {Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they will not be deprived therein. Those are the ones for whom there is not in the Hereafter but the Fire. And lost is what they did therein, and worthless is what they used to do.} [Hūd: 15-16]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) saying: "The first person to be judged on the Day of Resurrection is ... (the Hadīth goes on until referring to) a man who acquired knowledge, taught it, and recited the Qur'an. He will be brought and Allah will remind him of His favors [upon him], which he will recognize. Allah will say: 'What did you do with those favors?' He will say: 'I acquired knowledge and taught it, and I recited the Qur'an for Your sake.' Allah will say: 'You have lied. You learned so it would be said that you were a scholar, and you recited the Qur'an so it would be said that you were a reciter, and it was said.' Then it will be commanded that he be dragged on his face until he is thrown in the Fire." [Muslim]

2- Believing that his call to Allah Almighty is an extension to his Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in spreading his Sunnah and guidance, so that it would motivate him to follow the Prophet in his manner of calling to Allah, patience therein, anticipation of the reward,

and that he be included in the saying of Allah Almighty: {Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me."} [Yusuf: 108]

3- Remaining steadfast in his call to Allah Almighty, steady, and resistant to harassments and despair,

because he has confidence in the soundness of his path and hopeful for its result. He is confident that he will receive either one of the two good ends. He is hopeful for more and confident that the truth will prevail and the reward of the Hereafter will be granted. He endeavors to have a sincere intention and to set his deeds aright while hoping for the reformation of people by means of his preaching regardless of how much time it takes.

4- Patience and perseverance:

He should adhere to patience in the face of people's abuse, because anyone who carries out this mission will certainly be exposed to abuse from wicked people who oppose his call - and they are plenty. Abuse will be verbal or physical, either directed at his character or his cause. Consider the examples of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and the honorable prophets before him: {And certainly were messengers denied before you, but they were patient over the denial, and they were harmed until Our victory came to them. And none can alter the decrees of Allah.} [Al-An'ām: 34] Patience is a prestigious rank that is attained only through tasting the bitterness of patience and enduring its hardship: {Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.} [Al-Zumar: 10]

He should persevere in showing the truth, advocating it, and arguing for its sake, while having endurance and foresight to achieve the desirable end.

5- Resorting to wisdom on his path of calling to Allah Almighty.

He should employ means that are appropriate to the situation in question. Admittedly, people are not alike in their level of comprehension and knowledge; and they are not alike in their gentleness or harshness, or their acceptance or rejection of the truth. So he should approach each person in the manner that suits him and that is most likely to attract his acceptance and compliance. This is indeed calling to Allah with wisdom.

He should also be flexible and forbearing. He should not have aversion towards someone whom he considers deviant and abandon him, thus making him an easy prey for the devil. Instead, he should communicate with him, show him the truth, and make it appealing to him; for indeed many were the people whom we thought quite unlikely to be guided but then Allah Almighty guided them to the right path. Wisdom entails that he does not confront the recipients of his preaching with an open denial of their false beliefs if this might lead them to become more averse to the truth and more committed to falsehood. Allah instructed us to this in His saying: {And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds.} [Al-An'ām: 108] Instead, he should mention to the recipient the truth and endear it to him until it settles in his heart thus making it easier for him to abandon the falsehood he was accustomed to, because it is difficult to give up what one is accustomed to except with great resistance. Consider the wisdom of Allah Almighty when He legislated the prohibition of alcohol that was commonly consumed by people. The prohibition was done gradually in stages after the believers started to ask about it:

First stage:

In response to their question, Allah says: {They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and benefits for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit"} [Al-Baqarah: 219] He said 'benefits' in plural form to encompass any possible benefit people may perceive in it, and to indicate that all of those benefits wane in the face of the grave sin of consuming it, which unravels the truth about alcohol. Every individual who contemplates the matter of alcohol would prefer to quit consuming it, even if it is not prohibited upon him, since he realized that the sin it incurs overrides its benefits. In addition, the phrasing of the verse alludes to prohibiting it. One of the legal maxims of Shariah is that if the harm of something outweighs its benefit, it becomes prohibited. People develop an awareness of its forthcoming prohibition; so, by the time the prohibition is announced, they are psychologically ready to accept it.

Second stage:

Forbiddance to approach prayer in a drunken state: {O you who believe, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying} [Al-Nisā': 42] This at the least requires avoiding it five times in a day and night. By means of this, individuals develop the habit of refraining from it at certain times so that it would become easier to give it up entirely later on.

Third stage:

Prohibiting it at all times and conditions in the saying of Allah Almighty in the chapter of Al-Mā'idah, which was the last to be revealed in this regard: {O you who believe, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, sacrificing on stone altars to other than Allah, and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Indeed, Satan wants to cause animosity and hatred between you through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?} [Al-Mā'idah: 90-91] Thus the Companions quit all this easily after the prior

preparations for prohibiting it. So, Glorified is the All-Wise All-Merciful. On a relevant note, the tribe of Thaḳīf pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) on condition that they neither give out charity nor participate in Jihad. He accepted and said: "They will give charity and participate in Jihad." [Abu Dāwūd] The reason is that faith, once it enters the heart, entails that the believer observes all the legislations of Islam; the stronger the faith, the more perfect his commitment is to the obligations of faith and its complementaries.

6- The preacher should be knowledgeable of the Sharia of Allah to which he is calling, and aware of the various psychological, scholarly, and practical conditions of his recipients:

knowledgeable of the Sharia of Allah so that he can call people to Allah with insight and on solid basis to avoid self deviation or deviating others. He would thus be included in the saying of Allah Almighty: {Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me"} [Yusuf: 108] Knowledge of Shariah also enables the preacher to defend his call and persuade his opponents. Many preachers cause harm to themselves and to their efforts in calling to Allah because of their ignorance, which makes them lose the ground in the face of falsehood due to their lack of knowledge. Hence, such ignorant individuals must not be enabled to practice preaching, just as it is impermissible to enable young boys to participate in Jihad.

The preacher should be aware of the recipients' various psychological, scholarly, and practical conditions in order to prepare himself and choose a method of preaching most suitable to their conditions.

When the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) sent Mu'ādh to Yemen, he said to him: "You will come upon a people of the Scripture..."

He informed him of the condition of those to whom he is sent for the above two reasons. If the preacher is unaware of the condition of his audience, his goal may backfire, and he may give priority to less important issues or issues of no importance at all.

7- The preacher should retain a high level of religiosity and morals

in order to be a role model with regard to knowledge and deeds. He is expected to be compliant with any act of obedience or virtue he is preaching as well as refrain from any sin or immorality he is preaching against. To preach something without practicing it or to commit something that one preaches against is totally irreligious; Allah Almighty says: {O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do? Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.} [Al-Saff: 2-3]

Usāmah ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and thrown into the fire, and his intestines will slip out and he will go around by them like a donkey goes around a millstone. The dwellers of Hell will gather around him and say: 'O so-and-so, what is the matter with you? Did you not use to command us to do right and forbid us from doing wrong?' He will reply: 'Yes, I commanded you to do right but I did not do it myself, and I forbade you from doing wrong but I did it myself.'" [Al-Bukhāri, Muslim, and others]

Just as failing to comply with what he is preaching and committing what he forbids is irreligious, it is also unreasonable: Allah Almighty says: {Do you order people with righteousness and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Do you not have sense?} [Al-Baqarah: 44] Preaching generally emanates from one's conviction of the benefit and interest of what he is preaching. In this case, failure to abide by it will either lead him in harmful way if it is something he forbids or it will make him lose benefit or miss an interest if it is a command. Both cases conflict with reason; because a reasonable person does not miss what is beneficial or incur harm to himself. The other scenario is that one's preaching is not driven by conviction, which would be even graver because the individual would have labored for something he does not believe to be beneficial in addition to assuming a pseudo appearance. And if he is preaching to show off, he is actually fooling himself because his praise will soon wane and his true self will be exposed. Allah Almighty says: {As for the foam, it vanishes; but as for that which benefits people, it remains on the earth} [Al-Ra'd: 17] A poet once said:

The garb of ostentation is transparent

If you wear it, you are naked

The preacher should bear in mind that his slackness in obedience to Allah is not like that of anyone else because he is a role model for people. Whenever they see his slackness, they become like him or even worse than him. For this reason, a recommended act may be obligatory upon the preacher if the existence of an act of Sunnah depends upon his observance of it. Likewise, the preacher's daring to commit sin is not like that of others, because people follow his example, thus causing the spread of sin among Muslims and they get used to it. It becomes a customary practice rather than an abominable act for no reason but that preacher's daring to commit it in the first place. Accordingly, a disliked act may

become prohibited upon the preacher if his doing it will cause people to think that it is permissible. The preacher should realize the heavy trust and serious responsibility he is carrying. We ask Allah to aid us all in delivering it in a manner pleasing to Him, for He is All-Generous All-Kind.

8- The preacher should be respectable with regard to his appearance, statements, and actions without harshness

in order to earn people's respect, he should avoid being an easy target for liars, and try to gain the appreciation of the sincere. He should be serious if the situation requires it, jestful if the situation requires it, speak when it is best to speak, and remain silent when it is best to do so.

In addition to solemnity, he should be open-minded with a cheerful face and gentle character, and easy to communicate with others to avoid repelling them. Many people embraced Islam by virtue of open-mindedness, cheerfulness of face, and gentleness of those who called them to it.

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Chapter Five

Causes for success in preaching

Success in preaching is the fruit that Muslim preachers seek. Without this anticipation of success, their powers would weaken and their efforts would wane.

Every preacher should identify causes for success of his efforts so that he would follow them until he achieves the desired goal. Among the causes for success in preaching are the following:

1- Implementing what was mentioned in Chapters Two and Four.

2- Preaching efforts should be supported by figures of authority and power in the state:

Both calling to Allah and authoritative power are the pillars of reform of the Muslim nation. Once they converge and work together, the goal will be achieved by Allah's will. If they separate, however, the whole endeavor will be wasted or weakened to a large extent. It is, therefore, obligatory upon any state desiring true and firm pride, and empowerment on the earth to adopt the religion of Allah and follow the guidance of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). It should suffice with that and discard any other teachings and systems that are inconsistent with the religion of Allah Almighty and the guidance of His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him); because the word of Allah is the uppermost word and His religion is the triumphant religion. So, anyone who adopts the word of Allah and His religion will secure dominance and triumph against any opponent. {It is the promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know. They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they are unaware of the Hereafter.} [Al-Rūm: 6-7] It is obligatory upon any state desiring true and firm pride, and empowerment on the earth to support the call to Allah Almighty by all means of support in words and deeds, endearing the reward of Allah to people and warning them of His punishment; for, indeed, Allah may cause the power of the ruler to be more effective than that of the Qur'an. When faith is weak in people's hearts, the authority of the ruler becomes a stronger deterrent against sins and a better aid in their observance of acts of obedience, leading them to righteousness and reform. Moreover, insightful preachers must contact the figures of authority in the state to attract them to follow their path of the truth and explain to them the praised consequences of doing that and the happiness it brings forth in this life and the Hereafter; in addition to warning them against opposing it. They should make them aware of the evil consequences and misery in this life and the Hereafter brought about by opposing the truth. The preachers should make any form of support for calling to Allah Almighty appealing to them and warn them against forsaking or resisting it. 3- That the call to Allah finds a welcoming audience and fertile grounds such that the recipients are ready to accept it without the presence of any obstacles preventing them from accepting it. This situation most likely exists in a people who have realized the consequences of falsehood they are upon and are looking forward to someone who would rescue them from it. Consider, for example, how the call of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) came at a perfect timing and place after a period of suspension of messengers and obliteration of paths. People were longing to the light of the Message and aspiring to quench their thirst for it. Allah Almighty looked at the people on earth and hated them; Arabs and non-Arabs alike, except for some remnants of the People of the Scripture. So, the mission of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was like a rain descending on a dry barren land that readily absorbed it. The most indicative example of this is what happened between the tribes of Awas and Khazraj in the battle of Bu'āth, five years before Hijrah (migration of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah). Plenty of people including prestigious leaders were killed from both sides and they were in dire need of someone to bring them peace and unity. Al-Bukhāri narrated that 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "Allah caused the day of Bu'āth to take place before His Messenger (may Allah's peace

and blessings be upon him) was sent as a Prophet, so that when Allah's Messenger reached Madinah, those people had already been divided in different groups and their chiefs had been killed or wounded. So Allah made that day precede Allah's Messenger to pave the way for their acceptance of Islam."

Ibn Ishāq mentioned that when the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) spoke with members of the Khazraj tribe during the pilgrimage season, he presented Islam to them and they accepted it. They said: "We left our people behind, suffering from the worst forms of enmity and evil amongst themselves, and perhaps Allah would unite them through you."

On the other hand, if the call to Allah is addressed to people who are deeply involved in falsehood, indulged in its intoxicating allure, and disillusioned by its mirage, the success of the call is likely to follow a slow progression, because the wave of falsehood is powerful, just like restrained water when it is released. Hence, they require an equivalent power in calling to Allah that matches and overcomes that wave of falsehood. This must utilize all means and be done at all levels; and Allah is the One to rely upon.

4- The preacher should have high hopes in the success of his call without entertaining any despair. High hopes are strong motivation for the progress of his efforts and his endeavors to make it successful. Despair is a cause of failure and regression in calling to Allah. Hence, Allah Almighty opened many gates of hope for His Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him): such as His saying: {And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.} [Al-Dhāriyat: 55]; {It is He Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion} [Al-Fath: 28]; {That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this. So be patient; indeed, the best outcome is for the righteous} [Hūd: 49] in addition to other verses. Consider the hope of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and his foresight in the most difficult day he encountered from his people. It was the day when he returned from Tā'if after calling its people to believe in Allah Almighty but they rejected his call and enticed the fools among them to harass him. When he reached a place called Qarn al-Tha'alib, Jibrīl (Gabriel) called him and said: "Allah heard what your people have said to you, and what they have said in response to your call. He has sent the angel of the mountains to you, so that you may order him to do whatever you wish him to do to them." The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The angel of the mountains called me and greeted me then said: 'O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you like, I will let the Akhshabayn (i.e. the two mountains) fall upon them.'" The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) replied: "No, I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone ascribing no partner unto Him."

Hope is a strong motive to proceed with preaching and to persistently endeavor to make it successful.

We ask Allah Almighty to make us callers who advocate good and prohibit evil. May Allah guide the Muslim nation, bless it with good and guided leaders who are righteous and seek to reform, who judge and establish justice with the truth; for, indeed, He is All-Generous All-Kind. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all of his Companions.

Written on 19/22/1397 H.

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A Treatise on Calling to Allah

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The obligation of calling to Allah, and explaining its merits

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