

He Passed This Way and Left a Legacy

VOLUME ONE

Your Life Has Meaning

A Positive Impact During Life



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Volume One

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sake of Allah

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Dedication

To you, as you wonder what you can offer in the days that remain to you. Perhaps you have seen great achievements and thought little of what you possess. Perhaps your responsibilities at home have weighed so heavily that you imagined goodness must begin somewhere far away. Or perhaps you remember a past failure and wish you could turn back the years and do things differently.

We offer you these pages with affection, hoping they will help you recognise the opportunities for goodness close at hand: a right you can fulfil, a heart you can treat gently, knowledge you can learn and put into practice, or harm you can spare Allah's servants. You and we alike need Allah's help. We hope that He will set our intentions right, forgive our shortcomings and bless the little we are able to do.

When you ask Allah to improve your deeds, remember us, our parents and everyone who helped this book reach you in a sincere prayer. We ask Allah to employ us and you in His obedience, to make our presence a mercy, our words truthful and what we leave in people's lives good.

A shared effort. We ask Allah to grant it sincerity and acceptance.

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Introduction

Someone may change something in your life without knowing it. A teacher teaches you a word you will need years later. A person in authority treats you fairly when you cannot defend your own rights. A mother cares for you during illness, and all you remember of those days is her gentleness. The moments pass, but something of what they have done remains in your understanding, your confidence and your habits. Reflecting on this, you realise that an impact begins during life and takes forms much closer to us than famous names and distant projects.

We have an effect when we speak and when we remain silent, when we give and when we withhold, and when we fulfil our duties and when we neglect them. Our goodness may reach people we know, or extend to people we have never met. The harm of an unverified statement may spread, as may a bad habit we have made acceptable at home or at work. It is therefore not enough to ask whether our impact will endure. First we must ask whether it is good, what right we are fulfilling and what intention moves us to act.

Allah Most High says: “He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed” [al-Mulk 67:2]. This is the question that rearranges what we seek from life. A large quantity of work is not necessarily good work, and not everything people admire is pleasing to Allah. A project may seem great to those undertaking it while they

neglect an essential duty for its sake. An unseen deed may be more sincere and more beneficial than the deeds of those who place themselves before the public to receive praise.

For a Muslim, life's meaning is bound to being a servant of Allah. We worship Him as He has prescribed, fulfil the rights of His creation and work for their welfare through means He has permitted. Social service does not replace prayer, nor does frequent prayer excuse injustice or dishonesty. Worship in the heart is joined to upright conduct of the hand and tongue. The home, the marketplace, the gathering of learning and the road all become places of daily testing.

These meanings embrace the wealthy and those with little money, those who are learned and those still learning, people free to undertake public service and people occupied with caring for a child or a sick person. We cannot determine a person's standing with Allah by counting how many people know their name. Nor may we say of a Muslim whose deeds we do not fully know that their existence makes no difference. Rather, we call ourselves to make use of our abilities, abandon heedlessness, fulfil our obligations and then widen our good work according to our capacity.

This is where we begin: understanding our purpose, setting our intention right, learning what makes an action sound and giving rights their proper order. We then consider benefiting people, teaching, earning a living,

responsibility and the opportunities offered by contemporary means. We also pause over harm and repentance. Repairing what we have damaged is among the most sincere things we can offer, and a new life of obedience may begin with a quiet admission and a corrective step.

You do not need to wait until you fit an ideal image of yourself before you act. You need sincerity with Allah, awareness of what you can do and patience in learning what you do not yet know. Perhaps your first good contribution today will be to give relief to someone you have hurt, to be present for someone who needs you, or to fulfil a trust that has long been waiting. Whoever does good work in the present day has laid a foundation for the goodness they hope will remain after they leave.

Part One The Purpose That Gives Life Meaning

Chapter One Servitude to Allah and the Meaning of Life

Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, was riding behind the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when the Prophet asked him about Allah's right over His servants. The question was not how much a person builds or accumulates, but the foundation upon which an entire life is set right. The Messenger of Allah said: "Allah's right over His servants is that they worship Him and associate nothing with Him." With this right, a person begins to understand who they are: a servant of their Lord, created to worship Him and in need of His guidance and help.¹

The Qur'an states this purpose in Allah's words: "I did not create jinn and humankind except that they should worship Me" [al-Dhariyat 51:56]. A Muslim who wants life to have value does not seek a meaning detached from this foundation. They ask what Allah loves and is pleased with, make their actions subject to His command and hope for His reward. This servitude protects them from becoming a slave to people's approval, to changeable material success

1 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, hadith 2856, narrated by Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

or to an image they wish to project even when it contradicts who they really are.

Worship Connected to Daily Work

Ibn Taymiyyah defined worship as “a comprehensive term for everything Allah loves and is pleased with, of inward and outward words and deeds.” Alongside prayer and zakat, he mentioned truthful speech, fulfilling trusts, kindness to parents and good treatment of neighbours, orphans and the poor. He also mentioned the heart's deeds, including love, reverent fear, reliance and hope. This explanation brings together what our habits sometimes separate. Upright dealings are part of worship, while worship of the heart and the limbs cannot be reduced to good dealings alone.²

A person can carry this understanding with them when they leave for work: honouring their agreed working hours, disclosing a product's defects, dealing fairly with those under their responsibility and learning what will keep their mistakes from harming others. Such actions do not need a new name to count as obedience. They need to be sound and performed in hope of Allah's reward. A beneficial responsibility may become so familiar that someone forgets its merit; sincerely seeking Allah's reward restores its place in the heart.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah, al-'Ubudiyyah, in Majmu' al-Fatawa, vol. 10, opening explanation of the meaning of worship. The online text places this passage on pp. 149–150. [Source](#).

Nevertheless, we cannot say that every activity we consider useful is accepted worship merely because it contains some benefit. The intention, the means and the rights involved each have their own ruling. An action may benefit some people while wronging others. A person may intend goodness but fund it with money they are not entitled to use. Righteous action requires both the intention and the path to be sound. A good intention does not turn aggression into justice, just as a correct procedure does not dispense with sincerity of heart.

Understanding this connection changes how we see routine. Buying food for the family, taking a parent where they need to go, revising a child's lesson and keeping a promise at work may not catch the attention of someone seeking an exceptional achievement, yet they fulfil real rights. A household whose members find mercy and fairness in it may benefit more from a person's righteousness than from a long speech about serving humanity.

Obligatory Duties Before the Appearance of Achievement

An authentic divine hadith states: "My servant draws near to Me with nothing more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him." This principle prevents us from being so occupied with a visible voluntary deed that we neglect an established obligation. A charitable project is not sound if it rests on neglecting prayer, consuming money required for obligatory maintenance, or

abandoning someone whose needs no one else can meet. What Allah has made obligatory is not an obstacle to our impact. It is the first place in which our sincerity is tested.³

A practical application is to review your day before adding a new commitment. If a debt is due and you can repay it, fulfilling that right takes priority over a donation that would leave the creditor's right unfulfilled. If your mother needs help she cannot otherwise obtain, a distant volunteering invitation is not automatically more deserving than serving her. This does not call a person to retreat into private concerns. It calls them to extend their goodness on sound foundations.

Obligatory duties are not confined to isolated individual acts. Some forms of learning, service and care require enough people in the Muslim community to undertake them. Understanding these responsibilities, however, requires distinguishing between what binds every morally responsible person and what some capable people can fulfil on behalf of others. We will return to this in discussing knowledge and communal needs. It is not enough to call every useful idea obligatory and then demand it of everyone.

A Worth That Applause Cannot Create

A person's resolve may weaken when they compare their work with what appears on screens. They see far-reaching

3 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Softening the Heart, hadith 6502, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. This is a hadith qudsi. [Source](#).

achievements and remember the limited things they accomplished that day, imagining they have offered nothing. Yet widespread reach describes how far an action travels; it does not determine its standing with Allah. What is shown may be useful work deserving gratitude, or there may be shortcomings behind the image that we do not know. In neither case should the image become the sole measure of our lives.

Hidden worship has real meaning. So does restraining oneself from sin, and so does repentance, even without an audience. We do not need to record every kindness to establish that it happened. Allah knows what we give and what we cannot give, where we have been sincere and where shortcomings have entered. Remembering His knowledge awakens eagerness to work and loosens our attachment to human recognition, which may come or may be delayed.

One deed may combine personal benefit with benefit to others. A person learns in order to worship Allah with understanding, then benefits those who ask them. They earn a living to remain independent and support their family, then contribute to a service their community needs. They do not have to destroy one side for the other to be sound. What matters is to set their relationship right and recognise where personal capacity ends and another person's rights begin.

What Changes When the Purpose Is Right

When the purpose becomes settled, the daily question becomes more precise. Instead of asking what will make them appear useful, a person asks what they should actually fulfil. The answer may be to correct a habit at home, learn a ruling they need, complete a neglected task or contribute to a public need. Refraining from something forbidden becomes a positive decision in life, rather than an empty space requiring an excuse.

This does not mean that heedlessness disappears merely because we have read about our purpose. Someone may know what is right and postpone acting upon it; they may tire, weaken or make mistakes. But understanding the purpose gives them a path back: returning to their Lord, correcting their intention and repairing whatever they can. They need not imprison themselves within a brief portion of their past, or wait to feel constantly enthusiastic before becoming steadfast.

When we say that your life has meaning, we mean a purpose that guides you, gives you responsibilities within your ability and opens hope in what Allah has prepared. You are His servant, commanded according to your capacity, accountable for what has been entrusted to you and invited to do good. Here begins the positive impact we hope to make within ourselves and among those around us.

Chapter Two Caring for the Earth in the Light of Revelation

Allah recounts Salih's call to his people: “My people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. He brought you forth from the earth and settled you in it. So ask His forgiveness, then turn to Him in repentance” [Hud 11:61]. In this verse, mention of the earth comes between the command to worship Allah alone and the call to seek forgiveness and repent. This context is fundamental to understanding its cultivation and habitation. Human ability to act upon the earth must not be separated from responsibility before its Creator.

In explaining “and settled you in it,” al-Tabari preferred the meaning that Allah made them its inhabitants and cultivators, dwelling there throughout their lives. He also transmitted from Mujahid an explanation connected with inhabiting it. Al-Qurtubi mentioned other meanings, including making people its residents and cultivators, and commanding the building and planting they need. The expression therefore has an established discussion among Qur'anic commentators. It must not, by itself, be made to carry every contemporary conception called development or civilisation.⁴⁵

4 Al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, commentary on Hud 11:61. The quotation is from al-Tabari's own commentary, without independently authenticating every chain of transmission he collected. Source.

5 Al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, commentary on Hud 11:61, explaining interpretations of being settled upon the earth. The opinions he reports are not attributed

From Habitation to Responsibility

Human beings live on earth and need food, clothing, shelter and security. Much of this comes through the work of other people: one farms, another transports, a third teaches and a fourth treats illness. When these services reach those who need them through lawful means, they serve real human interests. This helps explain the Islamic law's concern with earning a living, fair exchange, preventing fraud and protecting rights.

Caring for the earth is not a claim that makes human desires the final authority on good and evil. A project may advance in its profit calculations while increasing pollution, injustice or waste. A building may be beautiful without providing a safe benefit. Judging an action therefore requires examining its reality: what sustains it, whom it benefits, what follows from it, and whether it involves aggression or the neglect of an obligatory right.

In the counsel given to Qarun, Allah says: “Do good as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek corruption in the earth” [al-Qasas 28:77]. The verse connects making use of Allah's gifts with seeking the Hereafter, doing good and avoiding corruption. Wealth is thus neither condemned in itself nor praised merely for its power. We consider how it is acquired and used, and whether its owner carries gratitude or arrogance.

to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. [Source](#).

Useful Work in the Story of Yusuf

When Yusuf, peace be upon him, interpreted the king's dream, his explanation did not stop at describing the coming years. The Qur'an records his guidance about planting, leaving most of the harvest in its ears and carefully managing consumption during the hard years [Yusuf 12:47–49]. When he later asked to take charge of the storehouses of the land, he described his safeguarding and knowledge: “I am indeed a knowledgeable guardian” [Yusuf 12:55]. The account brings together sound knowledge, stewardship of a resource people need and responsibility requiring trustworthiness.

This story is revealed news about a prophet. His knowledge must not be equated with human guesswork, nor may a contemporary plan claim a guarantee comparable to his account. Nevertheless, we learn that benefit can take the form of managing and preserving food, and that expertise and trustworthiness need one another. A trustworthy person who does not know the work needs learning and assistance; an expert who betrays trust may turn their ability into a source of wider harm.

This meaning appears in everyday administration. A manager who prevents usable food from spoiling by improving its storage, an engineer who identifies a danger before anyone is hurt, and an accountant who reveals a deficit early enough to address it all serve genuine needs. These are examples of applying excellence and

trustworthiness. Their administrative details are not being attributed to the wording of the prophetic story.

Planting as a Witness to the Breadth of Benefit

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “No Muslim plants a tree or sows a crop from which a bird, a human being or an animal eats, except that it is counted as charity for him.” Here is a benefit that may coexist with the planter’s need to earn a living, and may reach a creature the planter never specifically intended. The circle of kindness extends even to what birds and animals eat.⁶

A Muslim does not need to imagine that every planting is suitable in every place in order to love this work. Choosing the species, securing water, ensuring safe space for roots and respecting passers-by are practical matters on which the benefit depends. Someone who plants in a narrow passage and harms those who use it, or consumes a shared resource without entitlement, needs to correct their action. What matters is the good actually done, not simply the appearance of planting.

Conserving resources is therefore not confined to seasonal campaigns. Reducing waste at home and at work, repairing faults before they worsen, and caring for a public facility within one’s authority can all prevent

6 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Cultivation, chapter on the merit of sowing and planting when their produce is eaten, hadith 2320, narrated by Anas, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source.](#)

corruption and protect people's interests, according to what these actions actually achieve. This does not mean attributing every environmental theory to Islam. Every technical claim requires its own evidence, while Islamic values have their proper role in governing our choices.

Earthly Care That Does Not Displace the Hereafter

It is a mistake to make service to the earth an excuse for turning away from worship. It is also a mistake to make seeking the Hereafter an excuse for wasting what has been entrusted to us on earth. A Muslim may worship Allah through learning, earning, providing maintenance and caring for others, while still having specific acts of worship that these activities cannot replace. Prayer remains prayer, charity remains charity and fulfilling a trust is obligatory in its proper place. A useful occupation does not authorise its owner to redefine religion around the activity they enjoy.

Seeing work in this way removes the need for everyone to follow one's own example. One person's contribution may lie in agriculture, another's in teaching, a third person's in repairing equipment and a fourth person's in care at home. Society needs diverse, sound activities that support one another, rather than everyone competing for recognition in the same field.

The starting point is clear: identify a need you are able to meet, establish that your means are lawful, fulfil your responsibility with the competence you can attain, and seek experienced help where your knowledge ends. Then

review what your work is causing in people's lives. With these concerns present, caring for the earth becomes a responsibility practised in daily life, with effects seen in safety, truthfulness, sufficiency and mercy.

Chapter Three Deeds and the Effects We Do Not See

Banu Salimah wanted to move closer to the Messenger of Allah's mosque after some nearby land became vacant. When he heard this, he said: "Banu Salimah, remain in your homes; your footsteps are recorded." He directed them to the goodness in the steps they repeatedly took towards prayer. These footsteps were not a building bearing their names or a story people discussed, yet they were recorded.⁷

This incident brings us closer to Allah's words: "Indeed, We bring the dead to life, and We record what they have sent ahead and the traces they leave behind" [Ya Sin 36:12]. In explaining these traces, Ibn Kathir mentioned what remains of a person's deeds as well as the footsteps taken towards obedience or disobedience, and showed how the two meanings are connected. The verse is not restricted to charitable endowments or events after death. Present actions and what arises from them both enter into accountability.⁸

7 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Mosques, hadith 665, the account of Banu Salimah narrated by Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

Forms of Impact and Degrees of Responsibility

An impact may be tangible, such as repairing a road or providing equipment a patient needs. It may be knowledge or behaviour: someone learns to read, a worker develops the habit of checking facts, or a child sees an example of returning to what is right when their father apologises. An impact may also be harm prevented: fraud stopped, a dispute contained or a secret kept. It is unfair to recognise goodness only when something has been added in the form of a building or money.

A person's connection to an outcome varies. They may do the work themselves, point others towards it, assist the person doing it or provide an example others follow. The authentic hadith establishes responsibility for calling people to guidance or misguidance: the caller receives rewards like those of the people who follow, or sins like theirs, without diminishing any of their rewards or sins. It does not mean charging someone with every later event merely because they were present at the beginning. A relevant connection to their action and call must exist.⁹

Our self-examination should therefore be precise. A teacher is responsible for faithfully conveying what they teach and correcting an error once they know of it. They

8 Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, commentary on Ya-Sin 36:12, concerning deeds, traces and footsteps. No specific occasion of revelation is asserted here. [Source](#).

9 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Knowledge, hadith 2674, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

are not responsible for every independent choice a student makes that they never encouraged. Someone who provides a useful means considers the good or evil they know it facilitates. They neither claim that tools are neutral in every use nor burden themselves with what they cannot know or prevent.

Impact, Reputation and Acceptance

Impact is what an action causes; reputation is what people say about its author; acceptance belongs to Allah. All three may come together in goodness, or they may diverge. Hundreds may benefit without knowing who made the benefit possible, while a person's name may become famous through exaggeration that bears little resemblance to their work. We should give proper credit for achievements without making the attribution of a name a goal that competes with people's welfare.

Sahih Muslim relates that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, was among his camels when his son came to speak of people's struggle for political authority. Sa'd reminded him of the Messenger's saying: "Allah loves the servant who is mindful of Him, content and unobtrusive." This does not mean that all public visibility is blameworthy, or that public responsibilities should be abandoned. It corrects the assumption that being unknown amounts to failure in life.¹⁰

10 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Asceticism and Softening the Heart, hadith 2965, narrated by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

A project may need its organiser to be identified, its results reported or its workers thanked. Such things are judged by their purposes and effects. Turning every kindness into material for proving one's own importance, however, makes a person dependent on what others see. We can loosen this attachment by maintaining good work that does not depend on our being mentioned and by welcoming the benefit even when someone else announces it.

A Small Good Deed Does Not Mean a Small Life

We do not encompass what Allah records for His servants. Someone may protect a right in an encounter witnessed only by the person concerned, bringing a reassurance that many words could never achieve. Someone else may patiently care for a sick person for years without finding an eye-catching heading for their list of accomplishments. That effort does not become worthless because it does not lend itself to a publicity photograph.

Recognising the merit of hidden work must not become an excuse for laziness when we are able to act. Whoever knows an opportunity for goodness within their ability should take their share of it. The point is to direct resolve towards the right immediately before us, stop belittling small good deeds and beware of small harmful ones. A step Allah records does not need anyone's applause. Responsibility for a hurtful word does not vanish because its speaker calls it a passing remark.

Chapter Four An Honourable Remembrance and the Example of the Prophets

Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said: “Grant me an honourable mention among later generations” [al-Shu'ara 26:84]. Al-Tabari explained this prayer as a good remembrance and favourable praise enduring through coming generations. It asks for a truthful remembrance, not an image a person manufactures for themselves. It comes among prayers for sound judgement and joining the righteous, and for the bliss of the Hereafter and safety on the Day of Resurrection.¹¹

This context shows that loving a good remembrance is inseparable from loving the righteousness that deserves it. We do not begin with what people will say and then manufacture whatever secures their words. We are truthful with Allah and hope that He will grant us a favourable remembrance that accords with reality. One of its benefits may be that people follow a righteous example or discover a path of goodness made possible through someone's work.

Building the House and Asking for Acceptance

The Qur'an recounts what Ibrahim and Isma'il, peace be upon them, said while raising the foundations of the House: “Our Lord, accept this from us. You are indeed the

¹¹ Al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, commentary on al-Shu'ara' 26:84. The reference here is to his explanation of lisan sidq as good remembrance and praise. [Source.](#)

All-Hearing, the All-Knowing” [al-Baqarah 2:127]. In Ibn 'Abbas's narration in Sahih al-Bukhari, father and son are described working together: Isma'il brought the stones and Ibrahim built, while both prayed for acceptance.¹²

This noble scene combines obedience, manual work, cooperation and need of Allah. A project's greatness does not remove the need to pray for acceptance, nor does its maker's honour remove their hope for their Lord's mercy. We learn that completing a task does not put us in a position to declare ourselves pure. We rejoice that goodness was made possible, thank those who helped and ask Allah to accept it and set right our shortcomings.

The family enters this picture as a partner in goodness, rather than merely an audience applauding one person. A father and son may learn together, a mother and daughter may cooperate in caring for someone in need, or siblings may help preserve their family's rights. The aim is not to burden a child beyond their capacity, but to let them see work in its proper form, participate appropriately and learn that kindness is more than talking about kindness.

Patience That Numbers Cannot Measure

Allah tells us that Nuh, peace be upon him, remained among his people for a thousand years less fifty [al-'Ankabut 29:14]. He describes Nuh calling them by

12 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Accounts of the Prophets, hadith 3364. The description of Ibrahim and Isma'il, peace be upon them, cooperating in building the House is taken from Ibn 'Abbas's report. [Source.](#)

night and day, openly and privately [Nuh 71:5–9]. Despite this long call, Allah says: “Only a few believed with him” [Hud 11:40]. The one conveying the message does not control the guidance of hearts. What is required is to fulfil the command faithfully.

Those engaged in education and reform need this principle. A person may teach their child for years, advise a friend or patiently teach someone who learns slowly, yet fail to see the result they hoped for. Limited response alone must not become proof that their work is unsound. Nor should it excuse them from reviewing their methods. There is ample room both to fulfil one's duty and to seek ways of fulfilling it better.

Another close example appears in Musa's story at the water of Madyan. He found two women holding their animals back, asked about their situation, watered their flock, then withdrew to the shade and prayed to his Lord [al-Qasas 28:23–24]. He possessed neither treasures nor an institution, but addressed a specific need within his ability. The story shows attention to asking before intervening, to work that resolves a problem and to the benefactor's own need of Allah's favour.

From Admiring an Example to Doing Our Share

We do not benefit from the prophets' lives if our reading ends in amazement at their high standing. We learn worship of Allah alone, patience, mercy and trustworthiness, and fulfil what has been required of us in our circumstances. We do not claim the distinctive

privileges of revelation for ourselves or build general rulings on an unestablished detail. Every station has its due, and we follow their example in the ways Islamic teaching indicates.

These meanings may meet in a small decision: to do a kindness without making thanks a condition for continuing it, to teach someone we are able to teach, or to ask Allah to accept well-performed work instead of resting in self-admiration. If Allah grants you a good reputation, praise Him and ask that it be truthful and that your inward self be better than people imagine. Thus the idea of leaving a legacy is connected to a heart seeking Allah's pleasure before the pleasure of onlookers.

Part Two A Sound Heart and Sound Action

Chapter Five Sincerity and Renewing the Intention

Two people may perform the same task in the same place while wanting very different things. One hopes a right will reach its owner; the other wants everyone to recognise their generosity. A sound motive and another that needs to be resisted may also coexist within one heart. Intention is therefore among the first things a person who wishes to benefit others should learn. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Actions are only by intentions, and each person will have only what they intended.”¹³

Sincerity means seeking Allah's Face through your worship and hoping for His reward, without making His servants partners in the purpose for which you draw near to Him. You do not have to pronounce your intention before every action or search your passing thoughts so obsessively that you cannot begin. You need to know why you are acting and turn your heart towards Allah whenever you find it looking towards something that corrupts its purpose.

13 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, hadith 1, narrated by 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

When the Image Succeeds but the Motive Is Corrupt

In the hadith about the first people judged on the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of Allah mentioned a man who learned and taught knowledge and recited the Qur'an, and another whom Allah had enriched and who spent generously. Each appeared in this world to be doing praiseworthy work, but the hadith exposed a corrupt intention. The first wanted to be called a scholar and reciter, and the second wanted to be called generous. Each obtained the human praise they sought, but it did not save them.¹⁴

We do not read this hadith to accuse scholars and donors or judge the hidden heart of someone whose goodness is visible. We read it to watch ourselves. The self may adorn itself with service just as it does with wealth, expecting the beneficiary to acknowledge its importance at every opportunity. If they do not, it may resent them and even wish the benefit would disappear so they would recognise the giver's value. This is an illness requiring honest treatment.

It is also a mistake to say, "I fear showing off, so I will not teach, give charity or take part." Abandoning work people need does not, by itself, repair the intention. A person can begin in a way less conducive to boasting, speak less about themselves, attribute success to Allah and continue

14 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Governance, hadith 1905, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning the first people to be judged. The relevant passage is retold without additional details. [Source.](#)

learning and reviewing their conduct. They can treat their heart while fulfilling the duty they have recognised.

Publicity That Serves the Work

Making charity public is not forbidden in itself. Allah says: “If you disclose your charitable gifts, that is good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, that is better for you” [al-Baqarah 2:271]. Teaching and encouraging people, and fulfilling contributors' rights, may require some publicity. Yet a project's needs do not justify exposing unnecessary details of vulnerable people's private lives or manufacturing an exaggerated story about the organiser.

A team can announce what it has achieved without photographing the faces of people who do not wish to appear. It can explain expenditure and progress without claiming results not yet attained. An institution can properly acknowledge its workers while protecting the contribution of someone who remains unknown. Honest publicity serves a definite benefit. Exaggeration corrupts it, as does turning a beneficiary into a tool for praising someone else.

Renewing the Intention as Circumstances Change

A person may begin sincerely and later become attached to the approval or authority they receive. They may also begin hesitantly and then be helped by Allah towards greater sincerity. For this reason, we should not be satisfied with an old intention remembered from the

project's launch. We renew it when the work expands, when people praise us, when we disagree with a partner or when someone better suited becomes available to manage what we began.

Practical questions for self-examination include these: Do I welcome goodness being accomplished even when someone else takes the lead? Do I acknowledge those who helped me? Will I accept a correction that protects the benefit even if it weakens my public image? These are questions for examining ourselves, not a test that determines anyone's precise degree of sincerity. A heart may feel hurt by criticism while its owner struggles against that hurt and accepts the truth.

At the end of your day, do not make your service a reason to consider yourself superior to the person you helped. Ask Allah to accept it, seek His forgiveness for whatever blemished it and thank Him for enabling you to do some good. One of the best ways to preserve kindness is to remember that the giver, too, is in need, and that the ability to give is a blessing deserving gratitude.

Chapter Six Following the Sunnah and Learning Before Acting

A person who does good wants goodness to increase, and enthusiasm may push them past the question of whether the means are lawful. Yet the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever performs an act that is not in accordance with our matter will have it rejected." This

hadith subjects worship to the commands of Islamic law. No one may turn everything they personally approve of into a specific act of worship, or invent an unseen reward for it.¹⁵

This safeguard matters when organisational ideas become confused with devotional rulings. Arranging a lesson at a time convenient for people is an administrative choice that can change. Claiming that a number of days or repetitions we have chosen is a religiously established cause of a particular reward requires evidence. Similarly, choosing a technological tool for teaching is one thing; introducing an act of worship unsupported by revelation is another.

A Good Precedent in Its Context

A group from Mudar came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, showing signs of severe poverty, so he encouraged people to give charity. A man from the Ansar brought a pouch, and others followed with their gifts. In this context the Messenger of Allah said: “Whoever establishes a good practice in Islam will have its reward and the reward of those who act upon it after him.” The man had taken the lead in a lawful charitable act to which the Prophet had called people. Through his action he opened a way for others to follow.¹⁶

15 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Judicial Decisions, hadith 1718, narrated by 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her. Source.

16 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Zakat, hadith 1017, narrated by Jarir, may Allah be pleased with him. The wording

We learn that a sincere initiative can move those with the ability to help, and that action speaks more powerfully than encouragement alone. We also learn that calling a practice good cannot be separated from the lawfulness of the deed itself. We must neither isolate the phrase to legitimise every innovation in religion nor neglect the hadith's teaching about the merit of beginning good work and reviving its practice.

The words “until the Day of Resurrection” are not part of this wording reported by Muslim. The continuing reward is explained by continuing action and imitation, but words absent from the narration must not be inserted into a quotation from the Prophet. This small precision illustrates the importance of trustworthiness in teaching: a word we add today may be repeated by others as though it were part of the original hadith.

Questions to Ask Before Acting

The lawfulness of the purpose may be clear while the means still require investigation. Teaching those without resources is a useful aim, but the fundraising must be honest, the content sound, the teacher qualified for what they offer, and learners' time and privacy protected. Likewise, a wish to ease patients' suffering does not authorise an unqualified person to prescribe treatment they do not understand.

concerns taking the initiative in charity. [Source](#).

A person therefore asks scholars about unclear religious rulings and experienced practitioners about unclear facts and practical methods. A technical answer cannot replace a religious ruling concerning a right or prohibition. Nor can good intentions replace the technical knowledge on which safety depends. One issue may contain both dimensions, requiring cooperation in which each person recognises the limits of their knowledge.

Where recognised scholarly judgements differ, the disagreement should be represented fairly, without presenting a particular choice as consensus. Readers do not have to become jurists before every act of kindness. They are responsible, however, for learning enough to make their own action sound and for refraining from speaking without knowledge. An honest question at the beginning may prevent a long chain of mistakes.

Stopping Can Be an Act of Kindness

An experiment may reveal previously unknown harm. Correcting or discontinuing the method does not betray the purpose. It shows that the benefit matters more to its organiser than attachment to an idea. Work that fails to learn from mistakes may continue through force of habit even when the harm it causes outweighs people's need for it.

The same applies to someone who shares information they believe is correct and then discovers it is wrong. They stop circulating it and, as far as they can, correct it for those who received it. They do not defend themselves merely by

saying they meant well. The intention should lead them to correction, not persistence in error. This cultivates an understanding that an honest return to the truth protects the legacy we leave.

Chapter Seven Truthfulness, Trustworthiness and Excellence

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed a heap of food, put his hand into it and found moisture. He questioned its owner, who explained that rain had fallen on it. The Prophet said: “Why did you not put it on top of the food so that people could see it? Whoever cheats is not of me.” He did not object to the rain having fallen. He objected to concealing a condition the buyer needed to know.¹⁷

This story opens a wide field in understanding impact. Accurate information protects a person's choice and property; withheld information may lead them into a harmful decision. Fraud is not confined to the marketplace. It may enter a work report, a presentation of programme results, the promotion of a course, a service description, or any setting where people rely on what we tell them.

17 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Faith, hadith 102, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning a heap of food. Source.

Truth on Which Others Can Act

Speaking of a sale, the Prophet said: “If they are truthful and make things clear, their sale will be blessed; if they conceal and lie, the blessing of their sale will be erased.”

The hadith combines truthfulness with disclosure.

Someone may avoid an explicit lie yet omit information the other person needs, leaving them with a false impression. Trustworthiness requires disclosing relevant facts and avoiding partly true wording deliberately framed to suggest something contrary to reality.¹⁸

For example, a course may be described as having trained a hundred people when only a few completed it. The number registered is a fact, but it cannot substitute for the number who learned or became proficient. Putting each figure in its proper place makes shortcomings visible and repair possible, protecting money and effort. Dressing up a report delays correction and draws decision-makers into a false impression they do not recognise.

Acknowledging what we do not know is part of truthfulness. A teacher should not manufacture an answer to every question to preserve their image. A manager should not promise a deadline they know they cannot meet. An organiser should not promise to change everyone's life. An honest answer may be less exciting, but

18 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Sales, hadith 2079, narrated by Hakim ibn Hizam, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

it is better suited to building trust on which the work can depend.

Returning Trusts to Those Entitled to Them

Allah says: “Allah commands you to render trusts to those entitled to them” [al-Nisa 4:58]. A trust is not merely deposited money. It includes responsibilities, rights and information entrusted to a person, according to the agreement, Islamic law and sound custom. Someone may hold a file about a family in need; protecting it from publication is then part of serving that family.

Trustworthiness also requires that a manager not obstruct the work when leaving it. They hand over what their successor needs, explain existing commitments, separate the project's money from their own and leave records others can understand. These procedures may be modern in form, but they help fulfil an established right. Someone may begin a project well and then harm it by withholding what its continuation requires.

Trustworthiness does not demand pretending to possess an ability one lacks. A person assigned work beyond their knowledge explains their need for training or assistance. Someone unable to protect a particular secret should not accept a role requiring that protection until they are prepared. Early candour is kinder than discovering incapacity after people's rights depend upon it.

Excellence in the Details

Excellence appears in things achievement reports may not consider great: an understandable answer, a respected appointment, a procedure that does not exhaust an older person, a corrected name or money returned after an accounting error. As these details recur, the workplace becomes somewhere people can safely bring their needs. Its workers do not have to wait for an additional budget before beginning what lies within their ability.

Excellence is not a promise of perfection. A truthful person may make a mistake and a trustworthy person may be delayed, but their character appears in explaining and addressing the error. Dishonesty, by contrast, protects appearances even at the expense of someone's rights. Those around us learn responsibility from the path we take. How we behave after an error is therefore as much a part of our impact as how we behaved before it.

Chapter Eight Showing Off, Self-Admiration, Reminders and Hurt

Money may reach a person in need followed by words that wound them. The giver repeatedly reminds them of the gift, demands loyalty unrelated to their need or makes their poverty a story others circulate. Allah therefore says: “Believers, do not invalidate your charity with reminders of your generosity and hurtful conduct” [al-Baqarah 2:264]. Protecting a kindness is part of performing it, and a person may spoil what began as good work.

The Beneficiary's Rights After Receiving a Gift

Giving charity does not purchase the recipient's life or decisions. The giver may verify that money reaches its lawful purpose and attach valid conditions to a project. They may not treat every personal disagreement as ingratitude. A person needing treatment retains their dignity, and a student receiving support is not thereby obliged to praise the person supporting them.

Some people cause harm without intending it when they turn need into a public spectacle. A child's photograph or a patient's document may be shared far more widely than necessary, making its spread difficult to reverse. The giver should therefore ask: How much of this information does the work actually require, and who is entitled to see it? Whenever benefit can be achieved while preserving privacy, that is closer to gentleness.

When the Benefactor Becomes Absorbed in Themselves

Self-admiration makes a person magnify their work and forget Allah's favour and their own shortcomings, until they imagine success proves they no longer need advice. They begin by needing helpers, then attribute every good result to themselves and every deficiency to those helpers. They may change from someone serving people into someone unable to hear a need that does not fit their plan.

The remedy is not to deny the good that has been accomplished. A person may recognise what they did well

and learn from the reasons for success. They should simply place credit where it belongs: enabling success comes from Allah, others have contributed, the result has limits and the work still needs improvement. Recognising reality is different from declaring oneself pure and superior.

A divine hadith states: “I am the One least in need of partners. Whoever does a deed in which he associates another with Me, I leave him and his association.” This warning awakens the heart from contentment with appearances and calls it to renew sincerity. It does not authorise the reader to search other people's hidden intentions or pronounce their deeds invalid. The person they are able to hold to account is themselves.¹⁹

Treatment That Restores the Purity of Goodness

If you find yourself reminding others of your generosity, stop the words that hold your giving over them and restore their freedom and dignity. If you have harmed someone through public exposure or a hurtful expression, repair the injury in a way appropriate to it. Do not make another donation merely to avoid an apology or correction. Removing a photograph or correcting a statement may help them more than additional money.

If you discover that you cannot bear someone else's success in the field you love, revisit your purpose. You can

19 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Asceticism and Softening the Heart, hadith 2985, a hadith qudsi narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source.](#)

cooperate with them, direct them to something useful or restrain your tongue from belittling them. Every uncomfortable feeling need not disappear in an instant. What matters is not allowing discomfort to become injustice, and continuing to improve both heart and action.

It is good to keep a share of your work hidden, to keep company with people who advise without flattery, and to read the texts about dependence on Allah and acceptance as attentively as those about reward. The legacy we hope for needs a heart to carry it, and that heart never outgrows the need for repentance, however numerous its deeds. Kindness is safest when it reaches people with their dignity intact and is accompanied by sincere hope in what Allah has prepared.

Part Three Training the Self to Begin and Remain Steadfast

Chapter Nine Life, Knowledge, Wealth and the Body

Accounting for life does not begin only at its end. Years are made of days, and the time we imagine is plentiful is divided among repeated small decisions. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “There are two blessings in which many people suffer loss: health and free time.” A person possesses something they could use beneficially, then lets it pass without employing it for their good. When their circumstances change, they recognise the value of what they missed.²⁰

In the hadith of Abu Barzah, may Allah be pleased with him, which al-Tirmidhi graded hasan sahih, a servant is questioned about how they spent their life, what they did with their knowledge, where they acquired their wealth and how they spent it, and how they used their body. These headings gather the forms of capacity through which we live. The question about money includes both its source and its destination.²¹

20 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Softening the Heart, hadith 6412, narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both. [Source](#).

21 Al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami', hadith 2417. He graded it 'hasan sahih'; al-Albani authenticated it in Sahih al-Targhib wa-l-Tarhib, no. 126. Its chain is disputed. Wording and grading; report of authentication. [Source 1](#). [Source 2](#).

A Question That Sets Our Relationship with Time Right

The aim is not to turn every minute into visible production or deny ourselves rest and permissible enjoyment. The body has a right and the family has a right; rest may help fulfil an obligation. We review what consumes life without benefit, leads to something forbidden or wastes a right. There is a great difference between permissible recreation that restores energy and a habit that overwhelms prayer, work and family life.

Someone may repeatedly say they have no time while room would exist in their day if they reduced distractions they never consciously chose. We do not need to accuse them, but to describe the situation: Where does the time go? What cannot be moved because it belongs to someone else's right? What can be reduced? These organisational questions draw on self-examination without making one method of scheduling a compulsory Sunnah.

It is a mistake for a person with free time to measure others by their own circumstances. Caring for a child, remaining beside a patient or earning essential income are responsibilities that consume real time. The service required may be to fulfil that responsibility well, rather than add an exhausting activity and then feel guilty about being unable to sustain it.

Knowledge Whose Answer Appears in Conduct

Some people know hadiths about truthfulness and gentleness, yet that knowledge leaves no trace in how they behave during a dispute. Someone else has attended many courses but uses none of the learning to correct even one mistake. Knowledge is both a blessing and a responsibility. Gratitude for it includes acting upon what has become clear, rather than allowing accumulated information to replace effort against the self.

This does not criticise broad learning. It connects learning to its purpose. When you learn a ruling you need, act upon it. When you learn a useful skill, try it within the bounds of your competence. When an old mistake becomes clear, correct it. The first effect of a book you read may be fairer treatment of those around you, before you ever speak about it in a public gathering.

Lawful Wealth and a Protected Body

Generous donations do not repair the problem of unlawful earnings. The first question about wealth concerns where it came from. Then comes how it was spent: obligatory rights, maintenance, debt and other lawful uses. A small amount earned rightfully should not be belittled because it cannot establish a large project. It may meet a nearby need or support joint work with others.

The body is a means of fulfilling duties and working, not a machine to exhaust until it fails. A person seeks to preserve their strength within their means, obtains

treatment when needed and avoids imposing harmful demands on themselves or others. Illness does not mean the end of usefulness. The form of work changes as ability changes, while prayer, knowledge, advice and assistance remain available according to circumstances.

When time, knowledge, wealth and the body are considered together, planning becomes more than a list of wishes. It becomes a disciplined choice of what you can sincerely fulfil. Your decision now may be to reduce voluntary commitments in order to fulfil a neglected right, learn a needed skill or establish a small deed you have kept postponing. Each is a way of living attentively towards what Allah has entrusted to you.

Chapter Ten Taking Initiative and Resisting Procrastination

Ka'b ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, told the story of his absence from the expedition of Tabuk with a truthfulness that awakens the soul. He was able to prepare, would go out intending to do so, then return without accomplishing anything, telling himself he could manage it whenever he wished. Days followed one another until the people departed and he remained. The problem was not ignorance of the destination, but repeated delay until the opportunity to act had passed.²²

22 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Military Campaigns, hadith 4418, the account of Ka'b ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, at Tabuk. The passages concerning procrastination, then truthfulness and repentance, are used here. [Source](#).

We read this part of his story without equating his absence on that occasion with every ordinary delay in our lives. Nevertheless, it reveals a process we recognise: the possibility of acting later tricks us into imagining the opportunity will remain unchanged. Postponement repeats, what needs to be recovered grows, and eventually we arrive at a position we never wanted.

Resolve, Seeking Help and Action

The Messenger of Allah said: “Be keen on what benefits you, seek Allah's help and do not give up.” The instruction begins with recognising benefit, joins determination to seeking help, and forbids surrender to helplessness. It does not invite activity without understanding, reliance on oneself alone or endless grief over what has passed.²³

Making the first step small and specific may be the first way to loosen procrastination. Someone wanting to learn what will make their prayer correct begins with a needed issue, reading it in a reliable reference or asking about it. Someone wanting to serve their family identifies and meets an existing need. Someone wanting to correct information they published locates the error and repairs it. “I will become a useful person” remains a broad statement until it is connected to an action.

This method is a suggestion for making a beginning easier, not a formula guaranteeing success. A real obstacle may

23 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Divine Decree, hadith 2664, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

prevent someone, and the work may require permission, money or a partner. Not every pause should therefore be called procrastination. We distinguish hesitation that can be treated, a deficiency that must be supplied, and another right that takes priority.

Beginning Together

In the previously mentioned story of the Ansari's charity, the man did not wait for everyone else to give. His action helped set further giving in motion. One benefit of initiative is that it makes goodness appear possible to those watching. They may say, "We can contribute what we have," instead of waiting for someone who possesses the complete solution.²⁴

Not everyone needs to establish a separate project. Initiative may mean joining work that needs you, completing a task left pending or connecting two people who can meet one another's needs. Institutions sometimes multiply while simple tasks remain unattended. Wisdom seeks the benefit, rather than the title of founder.

When Results Do Not Appear Quickly

Someone may begin and then lose heart because no effect appears within days. Teaching, upbringing and changing habits take time, and their results vary. Patience here does not mean repeating what has been shown to harm. It

24 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Zakat, hadith 1017, narrated by Jarir, may Allah be pleased with him. The wording concerns taking the initiative in charity. [Source.](#)

means allowing reasonable work a chance while continuing to review it. We should not judge the value of every step by the enthusiasm accompanying it. The most useful day may be the one on which we honoured our commitment despite feeling uninspired.

If you miss an opportunity, acknowledge why without making regret your permanent home. Learn from what happened, repair what you can and look at what remains before you. The rest of the hadith about pursuing benefit directs us to submit to Allah's decree when calamity occurs and to avoid the objection that opens the way to Satan's work. Regret should not destroy your present ability to obey Allah, nor should remembering the decree make you abandon the means available to you.

Chapter Eleven Self-Examination Before and After Action

Allah says: “Believers, be mindful of Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent ahead for tomorrow” [al-Hashr 59:18]. This consideration calls us to pause over a deed, its intention and its duties, rather than letting life proceed through habit alone. Self-examination does not mean punishing ourselves with harsh words. It means recognising errors in order to correct them and goodness in order to thank Allah for it and preserve it.

In Ighathat al-Lahfan, Ibn al-Qayyim discusses examining the self before and after an action. Before acting, a servant considers their capacity, whether acting is preferable,

their motive and the assistance required. Afterwards, they consider shortcomings in obedience, actions better left undone and their intention in permissible activities. We take this division from his own discussion without automatically accepting every report he cites in that chapter unless it is established.²⁵

Before You Promise People

A promise on which someone else will depend particularly needs examination. You may promise weekly teaching without having the time, commit to support without a dependable income or accept a responsibility whose conditions you do not understand. The promise feels generous in the moment, then later becomes a source of anxiety and disappointment for someone who relied on it.

Ask about your present capacity, the right with which the work may compete and the alternative if you cannot continue. Do not let people's good opinion prevent you from explaining your limits. A clear, limited commitment may be kinder than a broad promise you do not know how to fulfil. Trustworthiness includes defining what you can do and leaving room for illness or unavoidable needs.

Examine your motive without extending the examination until it prevents action. Do you want the goodness you advocate? Can you accept another person's visible role in

25 Ibn al-Qayyim, Ighathat al-Lahfan, part eleven, section on self-accounting before and after action. This refers to the author's classification, not authentication of every report in the chapter. Online text. [Source](#).

it? Is personal anger leading you to present something as reform when its reality is revenge? Such a question may prevent injustice hiding behind the language of advice.

After You Act

Consider what happened, not merely what you hoped would happen. Who attended the lesson? What did they understand? Was there discomfort that could have been avoided? Who did not receive support, and why? These are questions about worldly benefit that can be reviewed. Acceptance of the deed and its reward, however, cannot be measured by a questionnaire or attendance register.

Then review what relates to your obligations: Did you fulfil the trust? Did you use something that was not yours? Did you wrong anyone? Did you correct what you knew was mistaken? If you find a deficiency, begin with what can be repaired. Do not conceal harm behind general thanks to participants or bury a valid complaint because it spoils the report's image.

Review may also reveal a good result deserving gratitude. A person does not need to find a sin in every success in order to be humble. They recognise Allah's favour, credit people's work to them, preserve what helped and consider what needs improvement. This is fairer than either exaggerated praise or exaggerated self-condemnation.

Self-Examination That Leads Back

Your day may end with two quiet questions: Which right did I fulfil well? Which right still needs repair? Follow

them with a possible step. These questions have no prescribed devotional number or obligatory time. They are simply a means of practising a religiously grounded meaning. Their usefulness lies in connecting reflection to action, so that self-examination does not become talk about change without change occurring.

Anyone experiencing prolonged distress that disrupts daily life should seek appropriate help, rather than calling every painful cycle of rumination useful self-examination. The aim is to improve intention and behaviour while hoping in Allah's mercy. The door of repentance is too wide for a servant to confine themselves forever within the image of a past mistake.

Chapter Twelve Moderation and Consistency

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, entered the mosque and saw a rope stretched between two pillars. He was told it belonged to Zaynab, who held it when she became tired. He ordered it removed and instructed a person to pray while energetic and sit when tired. This practical teaching shows that hardship sought for its own sake is not the measure of sound worship, and that continuity requires regard for capacity.²⁶

He also said: “The deeds most beloved to Allah are those performed most consistently, even if they are few.” This does not make every small deed preferable to every larger

26 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Night Prayer, hadith 1150, narrated by Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning the rope stretched for Zaynab. [Source.](#)

one without qualification. It teaches the merit of perseverance in righteous work and warns against a surge of effort ending in abandonment. The same hadith joins aiming correctly, doing one's best and recognising one's need for Allah's mercy.²⁷

A Commitment Others Can Rely On

People benefit from someone who comes at the time they have come to expect, even if the contribution is limited. A teacher who maintains a manageable lesson, a relative who regularly meets a particular need, and a professional who sets aside an appropriate amount of time to serve those unable to pay all enable others to organise their lives. Enthusiasm that promises much and then disappears leaves beneficiaries waiting without knowing when that wait will end.

A person may need to reduce a commitment after discovering that it exceeds their capacity. They should explain this to those affected, seek an alternative where possible, and retain what they can sustain. An honest reduction is better than an unexplained absence. If capacity later increases, the work can expand on an informed basis instead of under pressure from comparisons.

27 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Softening the Heart, hadith 6464, narrated by 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her. [Source](#).

When Circumstances Change

A person's life does not remain in one condition. They may become ill, marry, have a child, care for a parent, or experience a change in income. Sound judgement allows the form of kindness to change with circumstances, while obligatory duties remain subject to their established rulings. Someone may move from attending in person to helping from home, from spending to directing others towards assistance, or from extended teaching to answering a question they understand well.

An authentic hadith states that when a servant becomes ill or travels, deeds like those they used to perform while healthy and resident are recorded for them. This gives hope to someone whose established good practice is interrupted by a valid excuse. It does not make voluntary abandonment without an excuse equivalent to that situation.²⁸

Those organising the work also have a duty not to make a volunteer's worth depend on their willingness to become exhausted. Their time and limits should be respected, their genuine excuse accepted, and someone prepared to complete the task. Gentleness towards workers is part of the kindness they advocate. Benefiting recipients should not depend on mistreating those who serve them.

28 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, hadith 2996, narrated by Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

What Steadfastness Means

Steadfastness does not mean repeating the same method after its shortcomings become clear. A Muslim remains committed to truthfulness, trustworthiness and seeking benefit, while changing whatever methods need to change. Ending an activity that is no longer needed and directing effort towards a more pressing need may preserve the very same purpose.

Choose good work you can fulfil, include rest and other people's rights in your calculations, and do not treat a day of low motivation as proof that the path is wrong. Review your experience when circumstances change. In this way, goodness becomes an established part of life and depends less on special occasions or passing emotion.

Chapter Thirteen: Companionship, Sincere Counsel and Review

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, compared a good companion and a bad companion to a seller of musk and a blacksmith's bellows. A person is affected by their company even without intending to take any particular thing from them. Standards, expressions and habits pass to us through the people we accompany. We may grow accustomed to what we once rejected because we hear it every day.²⁹

29 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Sales, hadith 2101, narrated by Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning good and bad companions. [Source](#).

For this reason, building a positive impact cannot be separated from choosing an environment that supports it. Someone surrounded by people who justify every shortcoming, or speak only about their image and success, loses the opportunity to see what needs correction. A beneficial companion can rejoice in your goodness and gently tell you that a particular act is unjust or that a promise exceeds your capacity.

Sincere Counsel Is a Mutual Right

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: ‘Religion is sincere counsel.’ He included sincerity towards Allah, His Book, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and their ordinary people. Sincere counsel means desiring good and fulfilling the truthfulness and explanation that this requires. It must not become a means of vindicating oneself or publicly shaming someone who has made a mistake.³⁰

The adviser needs knowledge of the subject and an understanding of the circumstances being discussed. They may err by judging what they do not know or by giving guidance that increases a hidden harm. They therefore begin by asking and listening, distinguishing what they have observed from what they have assumed. Sometimes the most useful advice is to direct someone to a person with greater knowledge.

30 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Faith, hadith 55, narrated by Tamim al-Dari, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

The recipient of advice must not make their position a shield against review. The adviser may be younger or less well known, yet possess a truth that the work needs. Accepting the truth does not diminish dignity; it protects it from persistence in what causes harm. One can reject a hurtful expression while benefiting from the sound meaning it contains, without excusing the hurt.

Consultation That Can Change a Decision

When consulting others, a person should be ready to hear what they did not expect. Gathering opinions to endorse a decision already taken, then disregarding every contrary view, does not secure the benefit of consultation. Its proper conduct includes explaining the question and constraints to the adviser. Necessary information should not be concealed and the adviser then blamed for a weak answer.

In collective work, beneficiaries have a voice in describing their needs. A service provider may imagine that people need a lecture when they actually need an appointment compatible with their working hours, or a written explanation they can consult again. Beneficiaries need not possess the technical solution, but their experience of the difficulty is part of the knowledge that improves the choice.

Be a Beneficial Companion Yourself

The question is not only who helps you. Consider also what people find in your company. Do they leave your

gatherings more committed to truthfulness, or more willing to violate other people's honour? Do you protect the confidence of someone who consults you? Can you appreciate a friend's success without comparing it with your own?

The effect of your companionship may be quiet and repeated: restoring fairness to a conversation, rejecting a rumour, recalling an absent person's rights, or directing someone towards sound knowledge. A lengthy exhortation is not needed every time. When these qualities become familiar in your gatherings, those around you find support for their journey, and among them you find someone who will bring you back to the truth when you become heedless.

Part Four: The Rights with Which Positive Impact Begins

Chapter Fourteen: Your Own Rights and the Fulfilment of Obligatory Duties

Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, visited Abu al-Darda' and saw something in his condition and that of his family that prompted him to offer correction. He brought together food to eat, sufficient sleep, and prayer towards the end of the night. He then told him: 'Your Lord has a right over you, your own self has a right over you, and your family has a right over you. Give everyone who has a right their due.' When Abu al-Darda' mentioned this to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: 'Salman has spoken the truth.'³¹

The account should not be read as though one right cancels the others. Salman brought the rights together and restored an order his companion could bear. This reassures someone who imagines that righteousness is only apparent through self-exhaustion. Moderation that preserves the capacity for obedience may be closer to the Sunnah than enthusiasm that denies the body and family their due.

31 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Fasting, hadith 1968, narrated by Abu Juhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning Salman and Abu al-Darda'. The words are Salman's and were approved by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when he said: 'Salman has spoken the truth.' Source.

Prayer and Care for the Heart

The first thing needed by someone who wishes to benefit people is their connection with their Lord. They should maintain their prayers, learn what makes them sound, and establish a manageable share of Qur'an recitation and remembrance. There is no need to apologise for this time: it belongs to the very purpose for which they were created. One sign that work has gone wrong is that every binding right becomes postponable except the worker's public appearance.

The heart needs renewal because it may grow accustomed to the language of service while becoming weary of the people served. Someone who attends to people's needs may experience hardness or irritation as requests recur. They need worship that restores their sense of mercy, and rest that prevents them from taking their fatigue out on those who ask for help. This is not withdrawal from people; it protects the manner in which they return to them.

A Body That Helps You Fulfil Your Commitments

The rights of the self include not exposing it to harm without justification, and providing the food, rest and treatment it needs according to one's means. These needs vary with age, health and the nature of the work. It is inappropriate to impose the same amount of wakefulness or activity on everyone and then regard those unable to bear it as weaker in resolve or faith.

Someone working with others should respect their limits as they respect their own. A worker should not be asked to stay indefinitely because the task is charitable. Nor should an ongoing responsibility be left to one person because their conscience prevents them from declining. Proper cooperation distributes what can be distributed, prepares someone to take over, and accepts disclosure of fatigue before harm occurs.

Protecting oneself may also require removing something that weakens one every day: an unresolved recurring dispute, financial commitments beyond one's means, or work with no discernible finishing time. Not every problem is treated with a general statement about patience. A person learns patience while pursuing lawful means of reducing harm and consulting specialists when needed.

Balance in Its Proper Place

Giving the self its due does not mean placing personal preference ahead of every duty. An obligation may require effort and bearable difficulty, and a contribution one does not desire may become necessary. The distinction is between difficulty required to fulfil a right and difficulty created by poor judgement or a love of excess. Rest must not become an end for which every responsibility is abandoned.

With this understanding, a person can say yes to what they can manage, decline what they cannot bear, and give obligations their proper place. Their life becomes better

able to sustain a lasting contribution, because their giving proceeds from preserved capacity, a renewed connection with Allah, and an understanding that rights complement rather than fight one another.

Chapter Fifteen: Parents, Spouses and Children

A man asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, who most deserved his good companionship. He gave priority to the mother three times, then mentioned the father. Good companionship is more than an expression of appreciation on a special occasion. It includes gentle speech, patience with repetition, meeting a need, and concern that parents experience in their daily lives.³²

A son may search for an opportunity to serve strangers while overlooking a need at home. Serving those farther away is not wrong, but failing to notice those nearby disrupts the proper ordering of good. A father may not want additional money, but someone to listen to him or help with a procedure he does not understand. A mother may need relief from work repeated so often that she no longer complains about it.

32 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Manners, hadith 5971, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

Dutifulness Appropriate to the Circumstances

The forms of dutifulness vary according to need and ability. They may include a visit, required financial support, arranging care, following up an appointment, or a kind word at a difficult moment. Living far away does not make someone incapable of all dutifulness. They can stay in contact, share responsibility with those nearby, and check that the family receives what it needs.

Dutifulness has limits preserved by the Shari'ah. There is no obedience in disobedience to Allah. Alongside forbidding obedience to parents in associating partners with Him, the Qur'an says: 'Keep their company in this world with kindness' [Luqman 31:15]. Firmness upon the truth therefore accompanies courtesy and gentleness. It is not kindness to make a permissible difference of opinion grounds for estrangement or humiliation.

Complex disputes involving harm and competing rights require knowledge of their details and consultation with someone skilled in reconciliation. Their judgement should not be reduced to a phrase that places every burden on one party and overlooks the condition of the other. The purpose is to establish rights and retain kindness as far as possible, rather than treating every situation as identical to what we have known in our own families.

Serving the Family Is Part of Prophetic Guidance

'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked what the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, used to do

at home. She said that he attended to his family's work—that is, he served them—and when prayer time came, he went out to pray. This report removes the imagined conflict between public responsibility and care for the home. Someone concerned for the Muslim community can be gentle with their household and share in what they need.³³

The impact of spouses appears in the details of living together: respecting fatigue, speaking fairly, keeping confidences, providing reasonable maintenance, and appreciating what the other does. A person may undermine an entire lecture about mercy by returning home and listening only to themselves. The home is the nearest setting in which the sincerity of character is tested, because shared life reveals what brief encounters conceal.

Domestic work and caregiving are real labour, whether performed by a man or a woman, and whether or not they appear in a financial report. Someone caring for a child or an ill person helps preserve life, stability and learning. Those around them should recognise that effort and assist them, rather than requiring them to prove their usefulness through another activity added to an already heavy burden.

33 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of the Call to Prayer, hadith 676, from 'A'ishah's account, may Allah be pleased with her, of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, serving his family. [Source](#).

Upbringing Has an Impact in the Present

'Umar ibn Abi Salamah, may Allah be pleased with him, was a boy in the Prophet's care, and his hand wandered around the dish. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'Boy, mention Allah's name, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is nearest to you.' 'Umar later said that this remained his manner of eating. It was clear guidance in an everyday situation, remembered and practised by the person who received it.³⁴

Not all family teaching takes the form of an extended lesson. A child may learn from the way their parents respond to a mistake, keep a promise, or treat a worker. Hearing truthfulness and repeatedly seeing it gives the child a meaning they can imitate. Being asked to respect people while witnessing their humiliation places speech and action in conflict before them.

A child needs gradual learning, mercy and consideration of their abilities. They should not bear the burden of their parents' unfulfilled ambitions or become a means of enhancing their reputation. They learn what suits them, their strengths are developed, and they receive help with their weaknesses. Fairness between children does not require identical needs, but it rules out unjust favouritism and neglect unsupported by a genuine need.

34 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Food, hadith 5376, narrated by 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

Upbringing is a means whose benefit is hoped for, not a guarantee by which parents possess their children's hearts. They teach, supplicate and strive, while each soul retains its own responsibility. We do not abandon the duty of upbringing on the grounds that guidance comes from Allah. Nor do we judge every diligent parent a failure when a child departs from their guidance. Combining effort with dependence upon Allah is fairer to the heart and closer to revelation.

Those Without Children Are Not Excluded

Families do not take a single form. A person may be unmarried, widowed, divorced or without children, yet have opportunities for knowledge, mercy, maintaining relationships, earning and helping. We do not measure the value of their life by circumstances they do not control. They may be a trustworthy relative to whom the family's children turn, a teacher, or a supporter of someone providing care.

Those who have children begin by fulfilling well the responsibility entrusted to them, without belittling the repetition involved in upbringing. Its impact is already present in life: truthfulness increases, harm decreases, and a right is protected. Whatever continues from it after death is a further favour hoped for from Allah. It will be discussed in its proper place in the treatment of enduring deeds.

Chapter Sixteen: Relatives, Neighbours and Companions

Maintaining kinship is not based on an equal exchange on every occasion. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'The one who maintains kinship is not merely the one who reciprocates. The one who maintains it is the person who reconnects when their relatives sever ties.' This lifts the relationship above calculations of who called first or visited more, making kindness a response to a right rather than a reaction to the attention we have received.³⁵

Maintaining ties has many forms: greetings and enquiries, suitable visits, help when needed, condolences and comfort, and avoiding whatever damages the relationship through carrying tales or harbouring suspicion. Every form may not be possible at every time, so what is possible is done within the limits of the Shari'ah. Differences in how often people meet do not justify treating every shortfall as deliberate severance.

The Right of Those Close to Us

A relative may not state a need for fear of embarrassment and may require considerate attention. Kindness includes offering help without prying into unnecessary details. The most appropriate help may preserve independence, such

35 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Manners, hadith 5991, narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with them both. [Source](#).

as teaching a skill, facilitating a procedure, or offering a lawful loan the lender can afford, with the rights clearly explained.

Maintaining ties does not require surrendering an established financial right or accepting repeated harm without addressing it. A person can seek their right courteously, involve a reconciler, and organise contact in a way that reduces harm. Details vary, but seeking protection must not become retaliatory injustice or an accusation generalised to an entire family.

The Neighbour Who Sees Our Impact Every Day

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: ‘Jibril continued to urge me to care for my neighbour until I thought he would make him an heir.’ A neighbour's right begins with freedom from harm and extends to kindness according to capacity and need. Neighbours may learn more about our actual manners from noise, parking and a shared passageway than from what we write about benevolence.³⁶

Everyday examples include keeping entrances clear of obstacles, respecting times of rest, reporting a defect that threatens safety, and helping someone with an occasional need. When neighbours disagree over a shared matter, kindness calls for a solution that protects rights, rather

36 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Manners, hadith 6014, narrated by 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her. Al-Bukhari narrates it here through Imam Malik. [Source](#).

than allowing stubbornness to become more prominent than the original problem.

This care creates mutual trust that can benefit vulnerable or isolated people. Good neighbourliness does not, however, permit monitoring people or intruding into their private affairs. Gentleness requires that help remain an opportunity a person in need can accept, rather than turning into constant questioning about the details of their home.

Friendship When Tested

It is easy to be pleasant in comfortable times. Character becomes apparent when a friend falls ill, experiences financial hardship or makes a mistake. Supporting a friend does not mean justifying wrongdoing, and comforting them does not mean overwhelming them with unwanted questions. They may need brief companionship, a task completed, or words that preserve hope without false promises.

Friendship's positive impact is protected by loyalty, discretion and fairness. Old messages should not be published at the first quarrel, nor should knowledge gained in a time of trust become a weapon. A working partnership may end while the duty to safeguard confidences and the rights of companionship remain. Such situations reveal how much character means to us when it brings no immediate gain.

Someone who honours the closeness Allah has established between them and others will find an extensive field for kindness. They need not know every person in need throughout the world to be useful. They begin with those whose rights reach them, then cooperate in meeting needs beyond that circle. Their impact thus expands from stable relationships that know mercy and trust in justice.

Chapter Seventeen: Competing Rights and the Duty of the Moment

A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, seeking permission to take part in jihad. He asked: 'Are your parents alive?' When the man answered yes, he said: 'Then exert yourself in serving them.' This answer shows that knowing a person's circumstances affects the work towards which they are directed. The merit of a great field of action does not cancel a right specifically binding in the questioner's situation. Jihad that is individually obligatory and other forms have their own rulings, so the incident must not be generalised to every circumstance without qualification.³⁷

Much of our uncertainty about action arises because opportunities compete. A person wants to learn, serve, spend, maintain relationships and rest, but time and money are not unlimited. They therefore need to know

37 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, hadith 3004, narrated by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with them both. The guidance given to this questioner is not generalised to cases of individually obligatory jihad. [Source](#).

what is required of them now, what can be postponed, and what someone else can undertake, instead of assigning every request the same rank.

The Best Deed Depends on the Circumstances

In Madarij al-Salikin, Ibn al-Qayyim discussed differing views about the best form of worship. He then explained the excellence of seeking Allah's pleasure according to what the time and circumstances require. He mentioned fulfilling a guest's rights, teaching someone seeking guidance, assisting a person in need, and performing prayer when it is due. A servant should not become attached to one form of worship to the point of abandoning what takes priority in its proper setting.³⁸

It follows that the question of the best project for everyone has no single answer for every circumstance. Learning a particular skill may take priority for a student, paying obligatory maintenance for a provider, and putting an entrusted responsibility right for an official. An urgent need may arise that only someone with a particular expertise can meet, making it more pressing for that person than for others.

38 Ibn al-Qayyim, Madarij al-Salikin, vol. 1, section on differing views among those at the station of 'You alone we worship' concerning the best worship. His presentation of the view that benefit extending to others is always superior is distinguished from his own preference for considering the requirements of the time and circumstances. Source.

This does not permit a person to call everything they enjoy the duty of their moment. They refer to the Islamic ruling, the actual need and their capacity, and consult others when uncertain. One sign of poor choice is repeatedly prioritising work that attracts praise while delaying a right seen only by its holder.

An Urgent Need and a Longer-Term Benefit

We may face a choice between spending that relieves immediate distress and a project that teaches a skill requiring time. Both may be good. Priority depends on the severity of the need, who is meeting it, and available resources. A hungry person is not left waiting for a long-term plan, nor are the causes of continuing need neglected when they can be addressed. Immediate giving and capacity-building support one another, and the same person need not undertake both.

One benefit of collective work is that it allows this variety. Some capable people focus on urgent response, while others attend to education, development and follow-up. Communication between them protects people's resources from duplication or interruption. Requiring everyone to work in a single field weakens attention to other needs.

An Honest Refusal

Declining a new voluntary commitment may be necessary to preserve a prior right. A person should decline clearly and suggest an alternative if able, without making a promise simply to escape an awkward conversation. Not

every unanswered request represents a failure in kindness. Praiseworthy benevolence takes capacity into account and recognises that the rights of those who already depend on us are no less valuable because they do not repeat their request every day.

When the higher priority becomes clear, act on it without belittling other people's fields of work. What you have not chosen may need someone suited to it and possess merit you should not deny. Someone guided by this understanding experiences less competition over appearances and more cooperation over needs. Their impact becomes more faithfully connected to what Allah has required of them.

Part Five: Benefiting People and Cooperating in Righteousness

Chapter Eighteen: Relieving Distress and Meeting Needs

Offering Support in an Hour of Fear

When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, returned from the cave of Hira' after revelation first came to him, he found in Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her, a reassuring heart and words that strengthened him. She reminded him of what she knew of his conduct: maintaining kinship, bearing the burdens of those unable to bear them, honouring guests, and helping people through the difficulties that rightly called for assistance. She knew his deeds among people and had no need to construct an attractive image of him. She spoke of goodness she had lived with and witnessed. Her testimony shows the prominent place of kindness in the life of the man Allah chose for His message. Her own response also exemplifies the effect of truthful words spoken with knowledge and mercy.³⁹

How many people need, before money, someone who will listen without contempt or help them organise a matter that has overwhelmed them! Material need may combine

39 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, hadith 3, from 'A'ishah's account, may Allah be pleased with her. [Source](#).

with fear and uncertainty about where to turn. Assistance begins by understanding the need, then offering what one can. Helpful listening is not a promise to solve everything. It is a trustworthy presence that does not increase distress, accompanied by clear effort that recognises what it can do and what must be referred to others.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: ‘Whoever relieves a believer of one of the distresses of this world, Allah will relieve them of one of the distresses of the Day of Resurrection.’ In the same hadith he said: ‘Allah helps His servant so long as the servant helps their brother.’ This promise opens a horizon beyond the immediate encounter. You help someone in need today and hope for Allah's help in this life and the next. Someone who understands this does not confine action to exchanging one service for another, or abandon a person because they have little ability to repay kindness.⁴⁰

Forms of Assistance and the Responsibility of Choosing Well

Distress differs from one person to another. It may be a debt that has fallen due, unfamiliarity with a procedure, loss of income, or fear for a relative. Money alone does not make these situations alike. One person may need more time, another translation, a third legitimate mediation, and a fourth a specialist to help with a decision. The better you understand the underlying need, the less likely you

40 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Remembrance and Supplication, hadith 2699. [Source.](#)

are to give something that fails to address it or turns its recipient into someone permanently dependent on you.

A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, seeking a mount, but he had none to provide.

Another man offered to direct him to someone who could help. The Prophet said: ‘Whoever directs someone to good has a reward like that of the one who does it.’ This was a specific referral that brought the person in need to a beneficial source of assistance. It helps us understand the value of connecting people with expertise and services: knowing the appropriate provider, checking its suitability, and explaining the route clearly. Overwhelming a bewildered person with unfamiliar names and unchecked links may increase their burden, however extensive the list appears.⁴¹

Good assistance includes protecting what its recipient has entrusted to you. Their distress must not become material for gatherings, nor should photographing them be a condition of relief. If some information must be shared to complete the assistance, share only what is needed with those who need it, respecting the person's consent and rights. The aim is for them to emerge from distress better able to live, rather than having lost their security and privacy.

41 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Governance, hadith 1893.
Source.

You Need Not Possess Every Means of Help

You may be unable to repay a debt, yet able to explain the debtor's options or connect them with someone who can consider granting more time. You may not know the answer to a question, yet be able to acknowledge that and find someone qualified. Truthfulness here is part of the service, because a false promise delays the person from pursuing another opportunity that was open to them.

If the work takes time, keep communication clear: what has been accomplished, what remains, and who will take the next step? Silence after a promise may restore the anxiety you intended to ease. Such attention may appear small but has a considerable effect on someone waiting. Relieving distress is more than a moment of emotion. It may require responsible follow-up until help reaches its destination, or an honest apology that allows the person to seek another path.

Chapter Nineteen: Reconciliation, Sincere Advice and Intercession

Reconciliation That Stops a Dispute from Spreading

The people of Quba' fought until they were throwing stones. When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was informed, he said: 'Let us go and reconcile them.' The report moves from hearing about a dispute to working to extinguish it. An unattended dispute may generate further disputes: children inherit their parents' accounts, gatherings divide into camps, and rights unrelated to the

original disagreement are lost. When a reconciler succeeds in restoring justice, they protect the present and close doors to harm that might otherwise have spread.⁴²

Allah says: ‘Reconcile them with justice, and be equitable. Allah loves those who act equitably’ [al-Hujurat 49:9]. Justice governs reconciliation, preventing its name from becoming a cover for silencing the weaker party. An apology and restoration of a right may be the beginning of peace. A dispute may also require a competent authority to prevent aggression before reconciliation is sought. An arrangement resting solely on the victim's fear should not be celebrated as though the problem has ended.

The reconciler needs to know the limits of the role, be able to hear all parties, and convey their words faithfully. They should not make promises to each party that contradict those made to the other, or impose a solution merely because it is quicker or easier for themselves. They distinguish what a person willingly waives from what they have no authority to waive, and a personal right from an interest affecting others. If unable to do this, directing people to someone skilled in reconciliation is itself beneficial work.

Advice That Preserves the Recipient's Dignity

We have already seen that religion is sincere counsel. Part of its mercy is choosing what helps it to be understood.

42 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Reconciliation, hadith 2693. [Source](#).

Publicising a private error may drive its author to self-defence instead of considering the truth. Concealing continuing public harm may, on the other hand, leave people exposed to it. The measure is to understand the nature of the wrong, who is harmed, and the lawful way to stop it, then seek correction rather than satisfaction at another's expense.

In everyday life, sincere advice appears in clear actions: checking information with a colleague before publication, explaining to a friend the consequences of a promise beyond their capacity, or admitting to a relative that you misunderstood them. Advice may need a different time or gentler wording, but it cannot coexist with making falsehood attractive in pursuit of acceptance. Gentleness helps the truth reach its destination, while truthfulness prevents gentleness from becoming harmful flattery.

Intercession Is a Form of Giving

When someone in need came to him, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, encouraged his Companions: 'Intercede, and you will be rewarded.' Some people have money; others know the person's circumstances or have standing with someone able to serve them. Using one's knowledge and standing to secure a right or lawful assistance contributes something valuable, even when no money leaves one's account.⁴³

43 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Zakat, hadith 1432. Source.

Intercession takes its character from its purpose. Allah says: 'Whoever intercedes in a good cause will have a share in it, and whoever intercedes in an evil cause will bear a portion of it' [al-Nisa' 4:85]. Recommending someone you know to be incapable for a responsibility affecting people's rights is not sound kindness. Wrongfully advancing a relative over a deserving person harms someone absent from the mediation. Good intercession supports entitlement, clarifies what was unknown, and neither falsifies qualifications nor removes a right.

A decision-maker may reject your request for a legitimate reason you did not know. Do not make your own standing the subject of the dispute. Your purpose was to help someone in need, not to test the extent of your influence. A positive impact includes being able to advocate honourably, receive the answer fairly, and then seek a lawful alternative if the need remains.

Chapter Twenty: Supporting Vulnerable People and Preserving Their Dignity

Care That Encompasses a Whole Life

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'I and the one who cares for an orphan will be like this in Paradise,' and indicated his index and middle fingers. This promise awakens a longing for work connected to someone who has lost a source of support in life. An orphan is not defined solely by a need for food. They have needs relating to safety, education, health and

relationships, and they have financial rights. One person may contribute to one aspect of care while others undertake the rest. Assistance becomes complementary without anyone claiming to make everyone else unnecessary.⁴⁴

Sponsorship is a trust requiring continuity appropriate to the commitment made. A promise on which a child's guardian bases arrangements for education or treatment should not be abruptly broken when explanation and planning are possible. The aim is not to undertake what one cannot manage, but to assess capacity from the outset, define the contribution, and involve experienced people when needed. A merciful intention is better realised when accompanied by attention to the consequences of action.

Protecting an orphan includes not allowing their story to become an identity that confines them. They are a child with a name, interests and abilities, not merely an image of sadness used to attract donations. Care should bring them closer to a secure life and healthy participation, protect their property and privacy, and develop understanding and independence appropriate to their age. These are applications of trustworthiness. Their methods differ with circumstances, and their details require specialists.

44 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Manners, hadith 6005.
Source.

Working to Support Widows and People in Poverty

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: ‘The one who works to support a widow and a poor person is like one striving in Allah’s cause, or one who stands in prayer at night and fasts by day.’ Al-Nawawi explained this person as one who earns for them and works to provide for their needs. This depicts care that takes action to meet a need. It may include direct spending. Related forms of kindness may facilitate access to suitable work, an essential service, or a withheld right. Not every situation admits the same solution. Some people need a payment that helps them start; others require continuing care because of incapacity, illness or prolonged circumstances.⁴⁵⁴⁶

It is wrong to regard need as a moral defect or require every person in need to prove that they deserve mercy through a moving story. Fair questions extend only as far as necessary to establish eligibility and direct assistance well. Searching for details that do not affect the decision burdens people and infringes their dignity. Alongside responsibility for money comes responsibility for the questions themselves.

45 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Maintenance, hadith 5353. Source.

46 Al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening the Heart, chapter on kindness to widows, people in poverty and orphans, commentary on hadith 2982. Source.

When an opportunity to earn is offered, it should fit the person's actual circumstances: skills, time, location and responsibilities. A grant of equipment may fail because its recipient cannot find customers, or because caring for an ill relative prevents work at the imposed times. Consulting the person is therefore part of understanding their need. They know aspects of their own life better, while the specialist understands aspects of the proposed method. Combining the two forms of knowledge brings more enduring benefit within reach.

The Value of a Small Gift

A woman with two daughters came to ask 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, for help. She had only a single date and gave it to her. The mother divided it between her daughters without eating any herself. 'A'ishah then told the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, what had happened, and he explained the merit of caring for daughters. The scene was small in material value but expansive in its expression of mercy: 'A'ishah gave what was available, and the mother put her daughters first.⁴⁷

The story does not call for glorifying deprivation or abandoning efforts to address poverty. It teaches that no kindness should be belittled because it is small. The only meal available now may be a bridge to longer-term arrangements, and receiving someone gently may begin to restore their trust in those around them. Urgent care complements work on the causes of need: we feed a

47 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Zakat, hadith 1418. Source.

hungry person when they are hungry, then work with them, as far as possible, to prevent hunger recurring.

Chapter Twenty-One: Everyday Kindness and Refraining from Harm

A Day That Begins with Gratitude

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: ‘Each morning, charity is due from every joint of each one of you.’ He then mentioned declaring Allah's perfection, praising Him, affirming His oneness, proclaiming His greatness, enjoining right and forbidding wrong, and explained that two units of Duha prayer suffice for that. A person begins the day already preceded by Allah's blessings and receives them with worship and kindness. Charity in this hadith is not confined to money. Remembrance and prayer also remain acts of worship intended in themselves, rather than merely ways to improve relationships between people.⁴⁸

This breadth removes the excuse of someone who imagines that the doors of goodness are closed because they have no substantial surplus. They have a tongue with which to remember Allah and speak well, time sufficient for some kindness, and the ability to refrain from harm. People differ in these capacities. Someone whose opportunities narrow in one field can consider another. A

48 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Travellers' Prayer, hadith 720. Source.

person's standing before Allah is not negated merely because illness prevents a particular form of action.

The word *sulama* is explained here as the joints. We need not turn the hadith into a contest in anatomical knowledge to appreciate its guidance. Its immediate purpose in the reader's life is to recall the blessing of the body and ask how to give thanks for it. The educational exercise drawn from this is to step outside heedless familiarity: how easy is this movement I have taken for granted, and how much good can I do with it today!

Protecting the Road and the Rights of Those Who Use It

Islam's guidance on removing harm shows that kindness extends to shared facilities owned by no particular individual. An authentic hadith states: 'Removing something harmful from the road is charity.' A Muslim need not wait to learn the names of those who will benefit or receive individual thanks. It is enough for the act to be beneficial and safe in its setting, while seeking its reward from Allah.⁴⁹

Contemporary applications are broad: removing a small obstacle when it is safe to do so, reporting a hazard to an authority able to repair it, keeping a passageway clear, or maintaining cleanliness in a shared place. These examples are inferred from the principle of preventing harm; they

49 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, hadith 2989. [Source.](#)

are not the wording of the hadith. A proper report may be more useful than an individual attempt that endangers the person or passers-by.

Improvement sometimes begins by restraining one's own hand: not placing something harmful, not parking where someone in need is prevented from moving, and not leaving waste that another person must spend time removing. Social contribution becomes inconsistent when someone donates for an hour and creates burdens for others throughout the rest of the day. Respect for people's rights in ordinary behaviour provides the ground in which beneficial initiatives grow.

A Culture of Kindness Among People

When a child sees an adult respect a queue, apologise for inconveniencing someone, and thank a person who served them, they learn that kindness is not a seasonal slogan.

When an employee receives cooperation from a colleague who does not exploit them, trust develops and helps work get done. These actions need no public stage, but they change the meaning of a place for those who live or work in it.

Kindness includes making cooperation easy: explaining instructions clearly, notifying others when running late, returning tools to their place, and handing a task to the next person with sufficient information. These may appear to be administrative details, but they concern people's time and interests. When a Muslim performs them well

and seeks reward from Allah, they fall within the sphere of good according to their nature and intention.

Do not wait for an exceptional day to make a positive contribution. Ordinary days offer recurring opportunities. Among their blessings is that they train the self in attentiveness and mercy, making larger deeds an extension of good character rather than a passing leap that fades when enthusiasm ends.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Kindness and Cooperation in Public Life

Expansive Mercy Within Its Proper Limits

The mother of Asma' bint Abi Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them both, visited her daughter while still a polytheist. Asma' asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, about maintaining ties with her, and he said: 'Yes, maintain ties with your mother.' This guidance combines a Muslim's firmness in religion with lawful kindness to a relative of a different faith. Allah says: 'Allah does not forbid you from treating kindly and justly those who have not fought you because of religion or driven you from your homes. Allah loves those who act justly' [al-Mumtahanah 60:8].⁵⁰

Service to society is therefore not confined to people who resemble you in every respect. Justice at work, keeping covenants, permissible kindness and protecting shared

50 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Gifts, hadith 2620. [Source.](#)

facilities from damage benefit many different people. Islam's effect should be visible in a Muslim's truthfulness, trustworthiness and mercy, alongside observance of the Shari'ah's limits concerning the kind and means of cooperation. Openness to kindness does not require erasing the distinction between truth and falsehood.

In the account of a man who became very thirsty and later gave water to a panting dog, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said that Allah appreciated his deed and forgave him. Asked about reward for helping animals, he replied: 'There is a reward for every living creature.' This expands moral awareness to a creature unable to demand a right or return a favour. Reflecting on it softens the heart towards suffering and shows that mercy extends beyond what promises an immediate personal benefit.⁵¹

Cooperation Accomplishes What One Pair of Hands Cannot

Allah says: 'Cooperate in righteousness and mindfulness of Allah, and do not cooperate in sin and aggression' [al-Ma'idah 5:2]. This principle governs both the intention and the field of cooperation. People from different professions may come together to facilitate education, serve patients or repair a facility. Each contributes what they do well, completing a benefit none could achieve alone. As the

51 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Irrigation, hadith 2363.
Source.

work grows, clear responsibilities, protection of funds and documented commitments become more necessary.

Creating a new organisation is not a condition of participation. Joining an existing trustworthy effort may be more useful than duplicating its service. A limited initiative among people who understand their commitments may also suffice. The choice follows need, ability and legitimate regulations that protect people's interests. A grand name cannot compensate for weak service, nor does small work gain merit simply by being small. What matters is its soundness, benefit and fulfilment of rights.

Proper cooperation includes crediting those responsible for the work. The team's spokesperson should not appropriate the expertise of those who remain unseen, and the donor should not diminish the contribution of teachers and workers. Each role needs the others: the person receiving someone in need, checking information, repairing a fault or reviewing an account. When people feel their rights are protected, the service can more readily continue as personnel change.

Shared Facilities Are a Common Trust

Water, roads, public places and access to knowledge are resources connected to many interests. Kindness includes using them well, avoiding waste, and contributing to their repair according to ability. Environmental and service work require genuine understanding of the problem. Not every plant suits every location, and not every distribution

meets every family's need. Asking what is appropriate is part of giving because it protects resources from being wasted.

When individual rights are protected alongside shared interests, a coherent picture of positive impact emerges: a household whose rights are fulfilled, a neighbour who feels safe, a road that is maintained, work performed competently, and someone in need who finds assistance. The circles expand and capacities differ, but one principle unites them: worship of Allah that is sincere in the heart and borne out by conduct in people's lives.

Part Six: Knowledge, Work and the Capabilities the Muslim Community Needs

Chapter Twenty-Three: Beneficial Learning and Acting upon Knowledge

Knowledge That Begins by Reforming Its Possessor

Knowledge may open opportunities for benefit that money cannot, but it begins with something no one can do in another's place: knowing what one needs for faith, worship and dealings, then acting upon it. It is not a sound contribution to become skilled at speaking about virtues while remaining ignorant of a current duty or persisting in neglect of a right known to be obligatory. What a Muslim learns of religion should appear in prostration, truthfulness and justice before it appears in a title they bear.

In the chapter on knowledge in al-Risalah, Imam al-Shafi'i distinguished between general knowledge that no sane adult may remain ignorant of, such as the foundations of obligatory duties and manifest prohibitions, and knowledge in which a group specialises and suffices for others. This distinction helps the reader maintain direction. Not everything that arouses curiosity takes priority over what one needs, and the knowledge required of a merchant is not identical in every detail to that required of others. On entering a field of work, a person

must learn the rulings needed to act correctly and avoid what is forbidden.⁵²

Beneficial knowledge is not measured solely by how much is memorised. You may memorise the ruling on trustworthiness and then be tested with information entrusted to you, or the virtue of justice and then be tested when your relative disputes with a stranger. Such moments reveal learning's effect. This does not mean that a student must stop studying until reaching perfection. It means combining increased knowledge with striving to practise what has been learnt.

The Intention That Accompanies Study

Al-Saffarini related from Muhanna, a companion of Imam Ahmad, that Ahmad attached merit to seeking knowledge when the intention is sound, explaining that intention in terms of humility in learning and removing ignorance. This returns the student to their purpose: learning to overcome ignorance, worship their Lord well, and convey the truth faithfully. If knowledge seems to increase contempt for those with less learning, or an inability to admit error, that calls for self-examination rather than reassurance in success.⁵³

52 Al-Shafi'i, al-Risalah, chapter on knowledge, distinguishing general knowledge from what fulfils collective sufficiency. [Source](#).

53 Al-Saffarini, Ghidha' al-Albab, discussion of sincere intention in seeking knowledge, reporting Muhanna from Imam Ahmad. This identifies where the statement is transmitted, without claiming independent examination of its chain. [Source](#).

Humility has practical forms: asking about what you do not understand, distinguishing what you have read from what you have mastered, and saying 'I do not know' where you lack knowledge. These words may benefit the questioner more than a lengthy unreliable answer. Someone who respects the limits of their knowledge retains room to grow and protects people's right to an answer from someone competent to give it.

Sincerity also appears in how scholarly disagreement is used. The student seeks truth, understands the point of disagreement and its evidence, and refers to qualified scholars. They do not turn an issue into a means of winning or gathering followers. Not every disagreement is a contradiction that undermines knowledge, and not every opinion attributed to a scholar can be acted upon without considering its authenticity and context. Keeping company with recognised scholars and their books disciplines enthusiasm and develops discernment.

Knowledge That People Need

In his introduction to al-Majmu', al-Nawawi stated that collective obligations include acquiring the Islamic disciplines indispensable for establishing religion. He also mentioned medicine and arithmetic among the disciplines needed for worldly affairs. He reported disagreement concerning trades necessary for people's interests, then favoured regarding them as a collective obligation. The Muslim community needs people who preserve knowledge of revelation and people who undertake what its material

welfare depends upon. Each discipline has its rank and ruling according to its subject and the need for it.⁵⁴

Benefit through knowledge therefore cannot be confined to a single occupation, nor can all disciplines be equated in every respect. A teacher of the Qur'an performs work with its own particular merit; a trustworthy doctor provides a service people need; an engineer protects the interests of those who use what they design. The soundness of all these contributions is connected to the knowledge needed to perform them properly, and to intention and trustworthiness, while differences in the merits and rulings of disciplines remain.

Someone at the beginning of the journey should bring together two questions: what must I learn now to fulfil my duty, and what capability can I develop to meet a recognised need? They then proceed in a way suited to their stage, without assuming responsibility for every shortcoming in the Muslim community. Developing a scholar, teacher or skilled professional takes time. A student's patience in building a sound foundation may be part of their contribution before people see it as a completed service.

54 Al-Nawawi, al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab, introduction, chapter on the categories of Islamic knowledge, second category: collective obligation. He reports disagreement concerning trades and favours their being a collective obligation. This passage therefore does not establish a consensus on them. Source.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Teaching, Calling to Allah and Building Capacity

A Teaching Circle Sustained Because of a Hadith

Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami narrated from 'Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it.' Sahih al-Bukhari then relates that al-Sulami taught its recitation from the rule of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and that this hadith was what kept him in that teaching position. Here we see knowledge heard by a man of the early generations becoming an enduring direction in his life. His constancy was not empty repetition. He carried a Prophetic promise that moved him to teach.⁵⁵

We need not assume numbers of students or invent scenes absent from the report to recognise the value of his action. It is enough to reflect on patience with a recurring teaching circle, different learners, and mistakes requiring correction again and again. The impact of knowledge often passes through these small successive actions before later generations see it as an extensive legacy.

A beneficial teacher begins with what they know well. They may teach someone al-Fatihah if qualified to do so, help a student understand an issue they have verified, or explain a professional procedure they know and are

55 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, hadith 5027, including the account of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami's teaching. [Source.](#)

authorised to teach. The boundaries of specialisation do not restrict goodness; they protect its soundness. Someone who wishes to broaden their teaching pursues learning and qualification, rather than treating the desire to teach as a certificate of comprehensive knowledge.

Teaching That Protects Dignity and Welcomes Questions

Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam al-Sulami, may Allah be pleased with him, spoke during prayer without knowing the ruling on speech within it. After the prayer, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, taught him what belongs in prayer, without insulting or striking him. Mu'awiyah continued to recall the excellence of his teaching. The incident combines clear correction of the mistake with clear mercy towards the person who made it. Gentleness did not prevent explaining the ruling, and explaining the ruling did not require humiliating someone unaware of it.⁵⁶

Successful teaching includes understanding why an error occurred. It may arise from ignorance of a prerequisite, ambiguous wording, fear of asking, or a method unsuited to the learner's circumstances. Once the reason is known, the explanation can change, an example can be added, or time allowed for practice. Repeating the same words more loudly is insufficient when the problem lies in how the meaning is communicated.

56 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Mosques, hadith 537, from the account of Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam al-Sulami. [Source](#).

Women asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to set aside a day for them because men occupied so much of his time. He appointed a day on which he met, exhorted and instructed them. This shows concern for making knowledge available to those whose opportunity was not adequately served by the existing arrangement. Today we may draw from it the principle of identifying barriers that prevent a group from learning and arranging a suitable, properly regulated means, without claiming that every contemporary form appears specifically in the hadith.⁵⁷

From Providing an Answer to Building Ability

You may give a learner an answer that benefits them today. Alongside the answer, you may also teach them how to read the question, identify a reference and consult a specialist, making them better equipped for what follows. Good teaching combines both needs according to the learner's level. Beginners need clarity and foundations; advanced learners need a broader view and a greater share of independent work.

Calling to Allah especially requires insight and gentleness. Allah says: ‘Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation’ [al-Nahl 16:125]. The caller's purpose is not to win over a gathering or impress people with elegant words, but to explain the truth correctly and hope for their guidance. A question may be repeated and require

57 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Knowledge, hadith 101.
Source.

renewed patience. Immediate results may be absent, but honest explanation should not be replaced with manufactured excitement.

Trustworthiness includes reviewing material before publication, correcting errors that become apparent, and enabling learners to identify the source of what they receive. If you prepare an explanation, recording or digital resource, make corrections accessible. Teaching's impact expands through dissemination, and the duty of care for what spreads expands with it. Among the finest things a teacher leaves in a student's life are sound knowledge, a desire to learn, courteous courage in asking questions, and character worthy of imitation.

Chapter Twenty-Five: Earning, Professional Work and the Public Good

Work in the Life of a Prophet

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'No one has ever eaten food better than what they eat from the work of their own hands. Allah's Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, used to eat from the work of his own hands.' This teaching raises lawful work above contempt and shows it in the life of a noble prophet. Effort that preserves a person's independence and provides for those they must support can be an occasion for seeking reward, fulfilling a trust and benefiting others, even if people do not call it charitable activity.⁵⁸

58 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Sales, hadith 2072. Source.

A professional may imagine that their positive contribution begins only after working hours. Yet their work touches people's livelihoods, time, health and trust: repairing a fault, keeping accurate accounts, growing food, providing safe transport or processing a transaction fairly. When the occupation is lawful, its duties are fulfilled and good is intended, a broad opportunity exists in the place where a considerable part of life is spent.

Lawful remuneration does not in itself conflict with benefiting people. Professionals need income to sustain their lives and continue working, while people benefit from their service. Problems arise through deception, injustice, taking what is not due, or neglecting an agreed duty. A person may add voluntary service suited to their capacity, combining earning with assistance without requiring everyone to give in the same form.

Meeting Collective Needs Is a Practical Responsibility

Ibn Taymiyyah discussed trades needed for people's welfare, such as agriculture, weaving and building. He explained that their obligation depends on need: where the public interest cannot be maintained unless qualified people undertake them, those people may not leave others without the service. He also mentioned performing them for fair remuneration. This foundation reminds us that concern for the Muslim community's interests is inconsistent with belittling those who provide the means

of its support, or assuming that skilled people must bear every cost of service alone.⁵⁹

Applying this to a particular profession or country requires assessing need, capacity and alternatives, with the involvement of scholars and specialists. A skill may be scarce in one place and adequately replaced by other means elsewhere. A coordinated team may meet a shortage. The phrase 'collective obligation' must not become a slogan directing people towards a specialisation without knowledge, or blaming an individual for an inability beyond their control.

The conclusion of the Book of Earning in al-Mabsut gives attention to preserving obligatory duties, avoiding unlawful earnings, and guarding against injustice to Muslims and those under covenant. The book transmits this approach from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan and attributes it to the school of Abu Hanifah and his companions. These meanings join the pursuit of livelihood with the discipline of worship and justice. The marketplace is not outside morality, and scrupulousness does not require abandoning lawful means of provision.⁶⁰

59 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' al-Fatawa, vol. 29, pp. 194–195 according to the online text's pagination; discussion of trades, the need for them and fair remuneration. [Source](#).

60 Al-Sarakhsi, al-Mabsut, vol. 30, conclusion of the Book of Earning, pp. 286–287 according to the online text, reporting the school of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, Abu Hanifah and his companions. [Source](#).

Quality as Experienced by the Beneficiary

The quality of work appears in its effect on those who use it. A document may look attractive without meeting its owner's need. Equipment may be new but impossible for anyone to maintain. A task may be completed quickly, only for repairing its defects to take twice as long. Professional excellence therefore requires understanding the requirement, suitable skill, and a review that checks the soundness of the result.

One expression of this is explaining a service's boundaries: what it includes, when it ends, what it costs, and what requires further agreement. Clarity prevents disputes before they arise. If you discover that you cannot competently perform an important part, seek someone who can or decline it. Protecting an expert's reputation does not take priority over protecting the interests of those who trusted them.

A professional's impact extends to those learning from them. Teaching a beginner the correct method, explaining why a procedure is followed, and refusing to pass on deceptive tricks help raise the standard of later work. Humiliating a trainee or withholding necessary knowledge weakens the team's capability, even if the expert appears the most capable individual. Good professional impact delivers today's service and prepares someone to deliver it tomorrow with greater trustworthiness.

Chapter Twenty-Six: Trustworthiness in Shared Responsibility

Suitability Before Desire

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to appoint him to office. He said: ‘Abu Dharr, you are weak, and it is a trust,’ and explained its danger except for someone who assumes it properly and fulfils its duties. This guidance does not diminish Abu Dharr's merit. It puts responsibility in its proper place: a person's righteousness does not mean suitability for every office. Someone may teach well but manage money poorly, while another excels in implementation but is unsuited to resolving disputes.⁶¹

When choosing someone to manage beneficial work, we should consider trustworthiness and ability together. Personal affection, fame or seniority alone is insufficient. The person responsible needs to understand what they have accepted, possess the authority to fulfil it, and have someone who will review their mistakes. Giving them a grand title without the necessary tools and then blaming them for failure is unjust.

A person's positive impact includes knowing when to step forward and when to assist someone better suited. Relinquishing management while continuing to serve may be more beneficial than retaining a role one cannot

61 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Governance, hadith 1825.
Source.

perform well. Moving from public prominence to quiet work does not lower a person's worth. Merit depends on the soundness of intention and action, not proximity to the platform.

Funds Do Not Belong to Their Custodian

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, appointed a man to collect charity. On returning, the man distinguished between what he had collected for the work and what he said had been given to him as a gift. The Prophet rejected this distinction and explained that the gift was connected to the office he held. The report awakens a precise sense of trustworthiness: what matters is not the name given to a benefit, but why it was received and the rights connected with it.⁶²

Applications include separating personal money from an initiative's funds, disclosing any lawful remuneration, and avoiding concealed private benefits from a position of trust. When dealing with a relative or an organisation in which one has an interest, the decision should be transparent and subject to appropriate independent review, so personal preference does not become confused with the work's rights. These organisational procedures serve trustworthiness; their details vary with the activity's size and nature.

62 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Governance, hadith 7174, chapter on gifts to officials. [Source.](#)

Transparency does not mean publishing beneficiaries' secrets or all their data. It means making available the information a person entitled to oversight and accountability needs. A donor can know how funds are spent without a recipient's private life being exposed, and a competent authority can examine records within its remit. Different rights coexist, and good management protects them all.

Work Sustained by Its Participants' Cooperation

Responsibilities become clear when each participant knows their duties, from whom they receive information, to whom they pass it, and when to seek help. This clarity reduces conflict and protects time. A small undertaking may need only a written agreement and a simple record, while larger work needs broader systems. An initiative's soundness is not measured by the quantity of its paperwork, but by the adequacy of what protects rights and supports service.

The work also needs someone prepared to take over a role during its holder's absence. If one person alone possesses every necessary password, document and relationship, illness or travel can interrupt the service. A positive contribution includes sharing knowledge responsibly, documenting what the team needs, and developing others to carry responsibility. The work then moves from dependence on one person's memory to cooperation among people who know how to complement one another.

Ultimately, management cannot be separated from education. A meeting that hears a dissenting view, an account corrected without evasion, and a mistake addressed without humiliation all teach practical character. The work itself becomes a school of trustworthiness, and its benefit is connected both to the service and to the people who mature while delivering it.

Part Seven: Harmful Impact and Repairing What One Has Damaged

Chapter Twenty-Seven: Words and Examples That Spread Evil

Influence Does Not Certify Righteousness

A person may be influential while their influence becomes a burden against them. They may spread a corrupt idea, facilitate injustice, or teach a device that others use increasingly to consume people's rights. A large following is therefore insufficient to establish righteousness, and the long survival of a phrase does not make it an honourable remembrance. The question of impact includes its direction: towards what does it lead, by what path, and what does it leave in people's hearts and actions?

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'No soul is killed unjustly without the first son of Adam bearing a share of its blood, because he was the first to initiate killing.' The hadith describes more than a crime committed long ago; it explains the burden of opening its door. Alongside the reward for directing people towards guidance comes the warning that someone calling to misguidance bears sin like the sins of those who follow, without diminishing their sins at all. The leader is

responsible for the call, and the follower for following it.⁶³⁶⁴

This does not contradict Allah's statement: 'No bearer of burdens bears the burden of another' [al-An'am 6:164]. The caller to evil bears the burden of their own action, which includes calling, misleading and causation recognised as relevant by the Shari'ah. Other people's sins do not transfer to them merely through kinship or living at the same time. This distinction prevents carelessness about spreading corruption while also preventing an imagined responsibility for every act of someone we have known or taught something permissible.

A Word Spoken and Then Spread

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, taught that a servant may speak a word displeasing to Allah without giving it thought and fall into Hell because of it. People often measure speech by the time it took, treating a passing remark as small because it was spoken in seconds. Its truth or falsehood, the right or wrong it contains, and what follows from it are not measured by the duration of speaking.⁶⁵

63 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Accounts of the Prophets, hadith 3335. [Source](#).

64 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Knowledge, hadith 2674, narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. [Source](#).

65 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Softening the Heart, hadith 6478. [Source](#).

Through digital media, a phrase may reach people its author did not intend, an image may become detached from its context, and a copy may survive after the original is deleted. These features increase the need for verification without making every use of the medium blameworthy. Good practice includes pausing before repeating an accusation, reading what one shares, distinguishing news from opinion, and verifying the attribution of texts, especially those attributed to Allah and His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him.

Humour may have a harmful effect when humiliating a person becomes a means of entertaining an audience. Followers learn that mocking weakness is acceptable, while someone in need fears asking for help lest they become an object of laughter. A heart softened towards people respects the limits of humour and distinguishes a joke whose participants feel safe from degradation in which a crowd overpowers an individual.

When People Learn from Actions

An example may teach the opposite of its author's words. A child hears truthfulness praised, then sees an adult lie to escape a commitment. A trainee hears about trustworthiness, then sees an expert conceal a defect to avoid losing a sale. These scenes have an educational effect because they demonstrate a practical response to pressure. Not everyone who sees the mistake will imitate it, but the possibility of imitation calls those with standing to greater care.

Correcting one's example includes allowing others to see one's return to what is right. A specific apology, returning money, explaining accurate information, and accepting correction from someone younger all teach that status does not prevent error and that uprightness includes putting it right. This may be a powerful lesson for someone who thought admission of error was weakness.

Guard the beginning of the path to which you call people. Do not belittle an unlawful device because its advantage is immediate, or treat widespread use as proof of its soundness. If you are enabled to prevent an evil beginning through your own hands, you have protected yourself and those who might have been misled by you, even if this appears in no record of visible achievements.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: Wronging Individuals and Harming the Community

Good Deeds and Unfulfilled Rights

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked his Companions about the bankrupt person. He then described someone who arrives on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting and zakat, but who has insulted and slandered others, consumed wealth wrongfully, shed blood and struck people. Their good deeds are taken for those whose rights were violated, followed by the outcome against which the hadith warns. This teaching dismantles a dangerous illusion: that

numerous good deeds provide immunity from the consequences of injustice.⁶⁶

The hadith does not lead us to diminish prayer, fasting and zakat. It calls us to preserve them and their fruit by fulfilling rights and avoiding aggression. Someone may be known for generosity outside the home while harming those under their authority, or establish a beneficial project using money obtained by wronging a partner or worker. Good aspects do not, by their mere existence, erase a victim's right. Someone seeking a positive impact needs an honest examination of how they obtain what they give and how they treat those who assist them.

Injustice to individuals sometimes begins with familiar authority: a manager over an employee, a teacher over a student, or a relative over someone dependent on them. The weaker the rights-holder's voice, the greater the need for self-restraint and an accessible avenue of complaint. One sign of a powerful person's justice is not treating a claim of right as a personal affront, or retaliating against someone who exposes their error.

Harm Beyond the Immediate Victim

A single transaction may damage many people's trust when associated with a public undertaking. Repeated deception may make people afraid of a service they need, while neglect of a basic procedure may disrupt the

66 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Kindness and Ties, hadith 2581. [Source](#).

interests of people unknown to the person responsible. The assessment therefore extends beyond the perpetrator's profit or time saved to the rights of those affected by the decision.

Contemporary examples include publishing unreliable information on a sensitive matter, using beneficiaries' data for a purpose they did not authorise, or presenting a misleading account of funds raised for a particular purpose. These acts cannot be justified by their authors' general desire to do good. A good purpose calls for a correct path, and the greater the trust placed in a person, the greater their responsibility to preserve it.

Harm may occur unintentionally. In that case, one distinguishes sin connected to intention and negligence from rights that may still require remedy and compensation according to their rulings. A person cannot simply say 'I did not intend it' and disregard the rights of someone harmed through their actions. Nor should every mistake be judged deliberate betrayal. Justice requires establishing facts, distinguishing circumstances, and referring disputed details to those qualified to address them.

How Can Status Conceal Error?

A person may be surrounded by a group that conveys only praise, leading them to imagine that everyone is satisfied and the service beneficial in every respect. Someone harmed may remain silent for fear of losing something they need, and that silence may be interpreted as

acceptance. Anyone responsible for work affecting people therefore needs ways to hear complaints without exposing the complainant to punishment or public humiliation.

Honest review also asks about those absent: who could not access the service, who left it, and who found its conditions more burdensome than the need itself? The purpose is not to satisfy every desire, since some demands are unfair or impossible, but to identify shortcomings before concluding that the work has fulfilled its purpose. This understanding can begin with a calm conversation, a specific question and a record that separates facts from impressions.

Protecting a positive impact includes accepting the discontinuation of a method proved harmful, even after investing time and money in it. Attachment to what we have built can make us protect the project while forgetting those for whom it was created. If modification or closure protects their rights, it is a form of reform, not a betrayal of work we loved.

Chapter Twenty-Nine: Accounting for Harm and Repenting of It

An Open Door and a Continuing Responsibility

Allah says: ‘Say: My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Allah forgives all sins. He is the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful’ [al-Zumar 39:53]. A person's past does not oblige them to remain in it. Repentance to Allah is open, and returning is

a present action they can begin while its time of acceptance remains. Sound hope moves them to abandon sin rather than feel secure in it.

Repentance includes ceasing the sin, regretting it, resolving not to return, and discharging people's rights in the required manner. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'Whoever has wronged another in their honour or anything else should seek release from it today.' He warned of a day when good deeds will be taken for those whose rights were violated. Repairing one's impact therefore concerns the actual victim, not merely the apologist's public image.⁶⁷

Returning money to its owner is clear in principle, but remedies for some wrongs may be uncertain: a rights-holder who has died, mixed funds, or backbiting whose detailed disclosure may cause new harm. Such questions should be put to scholars with the facts explained. No single prescription should erase their differences. The essential point is not to use complexity as a reason for neglect. Begin by learning what is required, then fulfil it sincerely according to ability.

Correcting What Has Spread

Concerning those who concealed clear proofs, Allah excepted those who repented, reformed and clarified: 'Except those who repent, put things right and make the

67 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Injustices, hadith 2449.
Source.

truth clear: I accept their repentance, for I am the Acceptor of repentance, the Most Merciful' [al-Baqarah 2:160]. One lesson is that repair should address what the action damaged. If you published erroneous information on which people act, they need an explanation that reaches them and corrects what they received.

In contemporary publishing, the correction should be understandable and sufficiently visible: identify the error, state what is correct, link it to the original material where possible, and ask those who circulated copies to update them. A vague phrase in a place unseen by the original recipients may not fulfil the function of clarification. Choose a method that achieves correction without unnecessarily spreading the harm to a new audience.

This does not require the ability to erase every copy or identify every reader. Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. A person does what they can to stop the harm, correct it and restore rights, consults scholars about uncertainty, and seeks the Lord's forgiveness. A specific practical duty is more useful than imagining an endless chain that leaves them unable to take the first step in repentance.

An Apology That Leads to Action

A sincere apology acknowledges what happened and does not blame the injured person for feeling hurt. If you failed to fulfil a commitment, state what you failed to do and what you can repair, rather than merely describing your good intention. If a working system caused repeated error,

change that system alongside the apology, because leaving the cause intact threatens renewed harm.

The wronged person may not accept an apology quickly, and rebuilding trust may take time. Do not demand that they relinquish their right merely because their reproach caused you pain. Fulfil your duty of fairness, allow them legitimate space, and do not make reform conditional on applause. Repentance seeks Allah's pleasure and fulfilment of duty. Among its fruits are greater truthfulness, mercy and care about what affects other people.

If you influence people who followed you into error, use the means of explanation you possess to call them back. Do not be ashamed to withdraw an earlier statement when its falsehood becomes clear. Constancy upon the truth is higher than preserving an image of never being wrong. Among repentance's finest effects is turning the experience of stumbling into vigilance that protects oneself and helps others escape harm, without glorifying the sin or displaying its details.

Chapter Thirty: From Stumbling to Uprightness

Who Shows the Way After Opening the Door of Hope?

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, told of a man who killed ninety-nine people and then asked about repentance. He was directed to a monk who closed that

door to him, and he killed the monk. He then asked for the most knowledgeable person on earth and was directed to a scholar. The scholar told him that repentance remained open and directed him to a land whose people worshipped Allah, so that he could worship with them. He instructed him not to return to the land of evil. The man set out and died on the way. The account relates that the angels of mercy took him.⁶⁸

The story demonstrates the breadth of Allah's mercy and His acceptance of sincere repentance. It also shows the impact of knowledge when it leads its possessor to a sound answer and a path that helps put it into practice. The scholar did more than remove despair from the man's heart: he directed him towards companions and an environment that would help him leave his past. The story neither minimises murder nor cancels the rulings governing human rights in this life. It must be understood alongside all the texts that protect life and explain repentance and rights.

A repentant person may need to change what draws them towards sin: companions who encourage it, a means through which it repeatedly occurs, or a daily arrangement that leaves them in the same vulnerable position. Changes take different forms, including leaving a harmful relationship, seeking appropriate help, or developing a good habit that supports steadfastness. Begin

68 Muslim, al-Sahih, Book of Repentance, hadith 2766. The account also appears in al-Bukhari, hadith 3470. Muslim's narration. [Source](#).

with what is known to be useful and manageable, then review the situation without imagining that determination removes the need for practical means.

Truthfulness That Does Not Seek a Shortcut

In the account of Ka'b ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, after he remained behind from the expedition to Tabuk, he chose to speak truthfully to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He did not seek escape through a lie that would please people temporarily. He then passed through the period described in the account until Allah revealed His acceptance of his repentance and that of his two companions. The story does not promise that truthfulness immediately removes every consequence of error. It teaches that true deliverance is not built on adding one sin to another to preserve appearances.⁶⁹

Someone accustomed to justifying shortcomings may find admission difficult, but it opens the way to addressing the cause. Calling neglect neglect makes organisation possible. Calling ignorance ignorance makes learning possible. Acknowledging another's right makes restitution possible. Words that dissolve responsibility give their speaker no clear route to recovery.

69 Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, Book of Military Campaigns, hadith 4418, the account of Ka'b ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, at Tabuk. The passages concerning procrastination, then truthfulness and repentance, are used here. [Source](#).

Good companionship includes helping the repentant remain upright, protecting what has remained private, and not imprisoning them in the name of an old mistake. This does not prevent legitimate caution where an entrusted responsibility was previously compromised, or cancel victims' rights. It prevents vindictiveness and closing the future to someone who has returned. Justice preserves rights, and mercy allows a better life to be built.

An Impact That Grows from Today's Work

A person may think so much about what has passed that they neglect what is now before them. When Allah opens the door of return, let their first contribution be fulfilling today's duty: maintaining a prayer, beginning to restore a right, stopping a wrong, or undertaking necessary learning. These actions establish the sincerity of repentance in practice. They need not compensate for every lost year with an enormous initiative they cannot sustain.

If they stumble again, let them renew repentance rather than treat the stumble as proof that reform is impossible. Let them honestly understand its causes: weakness in the decision, an obstacle in the environment, or an unbearable feature of the plan? Then they take helpful means, hope for their Lord's mercy and seek His assistance. A person does not become upright through independence from Allah, but through dependence on Him and striving to obey Him.

Examining harmful impact thus becomes a path to beneficial impact: recognising the danger of spreading evil, protecting people's rights, returning from mistakes, and preparing the means of steadfastness. The door to action remains open for as long as life remains. A sincere step retains greater value than a perfect image that never moves from its place.

Part Eight: Contemporary Applications of Benefiting Others During Life

Chapter Thirty-One: Identifying Needs Through Consultation and Knowledge

From an Attractive Idea to the Right Question

The desire to help may begin with an appealing image: a classroom, an application or a gathering. That is a possible starting point, but it needs a testing question: what need will it address, whose need is it, and what has already been tried? A neighbourhood may need access to an existing service while an enthusiastic person is occupied with creating another version. The problem may concern timing, language or a difficult eligibility requirement, in which case a small adjustment may be more useful than a new establishment.

One principle of justice is listening to those you wish to serve. Ask about their circumstances without suggesting the answer, and allow them to describe what differs from your assumptions. The aim is not to make every preference binding, but to bring your understanding closer to reality. Beneficiaries' testimony complements specialist opinion and verifiable information. The idea is then assessed against Islamic guidance, capacity and benefit.

Listening does not always require a large study. A limited local need may be understood through brief meetings with those affected and existing providers, followed by a safe trial that reveals the shortfall. The amount of research should increase with the funds at risk, the number of people affected, and the seriousness of potential error. Preparing a simple information leaflet is not equivalent to launching a service concerning people's health or money.

Learning from Modern Design Tools

The Design Thinking guide from Stanford University's design school presents tools centred on understanding users, defining the problem, generating ideas, building a prototype and testing it. It offers adaptable tools, not a rigid recipe requiring everyone to begin at the same step. Some initiatives can benefit from this organisation because it helps move from assumption to observing reality and trying a solution.⁷⁰

These tools come from human experience in organising work. We do not derive rulings of worship from them or give them authority over revealed texts. We use what is sound and appropriate to the need, and modify what requires adjustment. A conversation may show that an idea is unnecessary, or a trial reveal that its method is

70 Stanford d.school, Design Thinking Bootleg, presentation of the five modes of work. These are human tools for organisation and experimentation. The practical application in the main text is the book's own formulation. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source.](#)

costly, leading to a different decision. Changing course then shows that knowledge has been put to use.

Consider a proposed example: a group wants to help older people use an electronic service. The work can begin by listening to their actual difficulties. Is the problem reading instructions, understanding terminology, having a device, or fear of fraud? The team then prepares a brief explanation and tests its clarity with them. This defines the service and may reveal that a structured session of individual assistance is more useful than numerous videos that never reach them.

Matching Need and Capacity

After understanding the problem, a person considers their ability and existing obligations. A benefit may be desirable in itself, yet they may lack the skill or time to provide it. Their role may then be to assist with a defined part or refer to someone else. Alternatively, they may be close to a need overlooked by people with substantial resources, enabling a precise service that broad initiatives cannot provide.

A brief written description can help the choice by identifying the beneficiary, problem, service, person responsible, resources needed and indications of success. Writing reveals ambiguity early. If the team cannot explain what will change for beneficiaries, it may need more understanding before inviting funding or volunteers.

Alternatives become clearer when we ask whether to support existing work, connect a service with people unable to access it, or create a new approach to an unmet need. The answer may differ from one neighbourhood to another. Creativity is more than departure from the familiar: it means finding a beneficial and sound method in its proper setting. The finest innovation may remove a complication everyone has accepted, or join two efforts previously working alone.

Chapter Thirty-Two: Education and Skills Initiatives

Three Barriers and Three Useful Experiences

OpenStax offers an example of making educational resources available. It is a nonprofit initiative at Rice University that publishes free, academically reviewed textbooks for reading or downloading. Its model brings together authors, reviewers and support that enables content to reach learners. The point relevant here is that the cost of obtaining educational material can be reduced through organised work combining authorship, review and access.⁷¹

Kolibri, from Learning Equality, addresses connectivity. It is a learning platform designed to operate without a continuous internet connection. After an initial download,

71 OpenStax, About Us, description of the initiative, its materials and how they are made available. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source.](#)

content can be distributed through local means, with tools for teachers to organise lessons and follow learning. Weak connectivity therefore need not inevitably interrupt all digital learning, although suitable devices, content, teachers and maintenance remain necessary.⁷²

In the Arabic-speaking world, Edraak offers online courses in Arabic. It was launched by the Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development. The platform describes free courses, content developed with experts and academics, and translated materials. The lesson is attention to the learner's language and making knowledge available through a medium they can access.⁷³

These descriptions present the models as their providers explain them. They do not establish that every resource suits every reader, or independently demonstrate how much improvement each beneficiary experienced. They reveal three distinct needs: the cost of materials, technical access and language. These may occur together, requiring more than one method of response.

A Local Application on a Manageable Scale

As a proposed example, a group of teachers could prepare a short resource for a basic skill needed by students whose level they know, then review and test it before expanding.

72 Learning Equality, About Kolibri, description of the platform and ways of working without a continuous network connection. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source.](#)

73 Edraak, About Edraak, description of the Arabic platform and courses. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source.](#)

They need not begin with an encyclopaedia. A set of accurate exercises with clear explanations, a teacher's guide and a way to check understanding may suffice. The resource becomes more useful when it can be updated and corrected instead of leaving old copies without follow-up.

If others created the content, permission and conditions of use must be considered. Free reading does not always mean freedom to copy, adapt and publish. The team can select appropriately licensed material, seek permission or produce original work. In every case, faithfully crediting contributors remains part of education's message.

The contribution may concern a practical skill: reading work instructions, calculating a small venture's expenses, using software required for an occupation, or preparing for vocational training. The teacher chooses what they know well, defines the skill and allows practice they can observe. Completing attendance hours alone does not establish competence, and a certificate should not promise what its holder has not learnt.

One example that could be developed is helping people unable to afford driving lessons, through qualified providers and instructors, with attention to regulations, safety and actual need. Its benefit is not confined to obtaining a licence; it may improve access to work or services. The idea's suitability, however, depends on the beneficiary's circumstances, the means to use the skill and subsequent costs. The example opens a field for thought

and requires an independent local study before implementation.

The Learner Shares in the Programme's Success

Suitable teaching times may differ for someone caring for a child and a full-time student. A suitable medium differs for someone who reads easily and someone who needs audio explanation or larger print. The team therefore asks about significant barriers and adjusts what it can. Some changes cost little: dividing a lesson, providing a clear summary, setting a known review time, or allowing questions without the embarrassment of asking before a group.

Women and men, young and old, have needs and abilities that overlap and differ. No group should be confined to one form of giving or receiving. A woman may possess valuable technical expertise, while a man caring full-time for a relative may need flexible learning. Individual circumstances are considered alongside Islamic rulings, then the service is designed to remove the actual barrier.

A good conclusion leaves learners knowing their next step: material to revise, training they need or an organisation to contact. The team also knows what succeeded and what requires improvement. Education then forms a coherent sequence, and a meeting's impact does not end when participants leave the venue.

Chapter Thirty-Three: Serving Society Through Time, Expertise and Technology

Expertise That Reaches from Afar

The United Nations Volunteers Online Volunteering service presents a model connecting organisations with skilled people who work remotely through defined tasks, participant selection and cooperation followed by evaluation. Each assignment has its requirements and conditions. The organisational lesson is that time and expertise can be contributed without travelling regularly to the place of service, and an assignment can be limited with a defined outcome.⁷⁴

Proposed applications include a qualified accountant helping a small initiative organise its records, an editor reviewing educational material, a proficient translator translating useful instructions with permission, or a technical specialist maintaining a communication tool. A Muslim chooses a permissible task suited to their expertise and checks the organisation, the work's rights and its conditions. A recognised platform does not remove the need to examine each assignment's actual nature.

Remote work needs the same discipline as in-person work: a clear scope, delivery date, means of asking questions and someone to review the result. A small agreement for one

74 United Nations Volunteers, Become an Online Volunteer, description of the service and task organisation. Check each assignment's conditions when applying. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source](#).

task may succeed better than a general promise of permanent assistance. A volunteer occupied with family care or with limited mobility may find a task with bounded scheduling suitable, while retaining their right to rest and fulfil existing commitments.

Removing Digital Barriers

The World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative explains that the way websites are built may enable or prevent access for people with disabilities. Examples include alternative text for images, keyboard operation and text versions of audio content. It also emphasises that automated checking tools alone cannot establish full accessibility; informed human evaluation is needed.⁷⁵

From this we can identify a practical field of benefit: reviewing a resource or service one is authorised to work on, identifying access barriers, and repairing them with the involvement of users. An audio lesson may become useful to someone unable to hear it when an accurate transcript is provided. A service form may improve when its fields and instructions are clear. These are practical examples whose competent implementation requires knowledge of the relevant standards and techniques.

People with disabilities should not be discussed only as recipients of assistance. They include teachers,

75 W3C Web Accessibility Initiative, Introduction to Web Accessibility, definition, examples and limits of automated evaluation. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source](#).

programmers, writers and experts. One of them may understand a barrier and its remedy better than the team. Involving them in design and review protects their rights, improves quality, and shifts the perspective from presumed general incapacity to understanding specific abilities and specific needs.

Technology Is a Means Governed by Its Purpose

Digital tools may facilitate reaching people and organising appointments and materials, but they create responsibilities concerning information, privacy and continuity of service. Trustworthiness includes collecting only what the work needs, limiting access to those who require it, and explaining the reason for requesting information. A securely kept paper record or direct conversation may suit a small number of cases and a limited need better than a complex platform.

Automated tools may assist some editing, preliminary research and organisational tasks, provided a person reviews what they rely upon and does not attribute an answer to an unverified source. Particular care is needed with Islamic texts and information on which people base important decisions. Speed does not make information correct, and the publisher is responsible for choosing what to present.

Technological benefit also includes maintaining what has been created: who looks after the account, who answers questions, and how are data transferred to an authorised successor when the team changes? People may welcome a

new application that stops working months later because operating costs were not calculated. The cost of service throughout the commitment must therefore be considered, not merely the cost of starting.

Not everyone seeking a positive impact needs technical expertise. A person can describe a need they understand, test whether instructions are clear, or help a specialist understand people's circumstances. Combining technical and human knowledge brings a service closer to something beneficiaries can use in daily life. That purpose should remain in the team's view.

Chapter Thirty-Four: Evaluating Results and Developing the Experience

What Changed for People?

When an activity ends, it is natural to ask how many attended, how much was spent and how many hours were contributed. These figures describe what we did but do not alone establish how people benefited. A student may attend lessons without understanding the skill. Assistance may reach a family after the need for which it was raised has passed. We therefore also ask what change we intended, whether signs of it appeared, and what prevented it.

This question supports honest description. Someone who says they trained twenty people should explain what that training involved, rather than automatically turning the figure into twenty jobs. Someone who published material

without knowing how much it was used should describe the publication, not invent an unverified impact. Hopes and expectations may be mentioned if distinguished from the reality known.

Nesta presents a framework of progressively stronger evidence. It begins by explaining how a benefit is expected to occur, moves to collecting data about it, and then to stronger methods for assessing the intervention's impact and potential replication. It emphasises matching the level of evaluation to the work's stage. A practical benefit is distinguishing a promising idea from a well-tested result, while avoiding demands on an emerging trial that are disproportionate to its size.⁷⁶

An Example of Teaching a Skill

Suppose a proposed initiative aims to help adults read work-related instructions. The number of meetings describes the activity, attendance describes reach, and the learner's ability to read and understand a suitable sample comes closer to the intended result. Performance at the beginning and end can be compared through an appropriate, fair method that respects privacy and does not turn assessment into humiliation.

⁷⁶ Nesta, Standards of Evidence, progression in evidence strength and matching evaluation to an initiative's stage. The educational examples that follow are proposed illustrations, not results of a study conducted for this book. Accessed 13 September 2026. [Source.](#)

Other factors may contribute to improvement after lessons: practice at work, teaching from a relative, or differences between those who completed and those who withdrew. We should therefore not assert that the initiative alone caused every change unless the evaluation supports that claim. An initially modest, precise description is sufficient. Evaluation specialists can be consulted as the work grows and claims about its impact become the basis of important decisions.

The team also asks about those who did not improve or continue. Times may have been unsuitable, material above their level, or the venue distant. Withdrawal may also have had nothing to do with the service. Listening opens alternatives. Labelling everyone who left as uncommitted closes learning and conceals possible design faults.

What Numbers Do Not Measure

We measure service results where possible to improve them. Acceptance by Allah, sincerity and the reward of deeds are not numbers for a spreadsheet. A person may fulfil their duty sincerely without seeing an immediate result, just as work may spread while its author's intention is corrupt. Visible organisational success therefore cannot be equated with comprehensive religious approval.

Some benefits remain difficult to measure precisely: a sense of safety after a frightening event, encouragement that supported perseverance, or an example observed by a child who never mentioned it. We can listen to people's accounts and describe them faithfully without enlarging

them into proof of everything we hope for. Limits to knowledge do not prevent action, but they discipline what we say about it.

Evaluation should also be proportionate to its cost. We should not burden someone in need with lengthy questions for a simple activity or collect sensitive information for an attractive presentation. Ask what will support a decision, keep what is needed, and appropriately remove what is unnecessary. Better questions reduce the burden and increase the answer's usefulness.

Development, Continuation and Closure

Review may lead to expanding a service, changing it, integrating it into existing work, or ending it once its purpose has been fulfilled. Each decision has its evidence and rights. If an ongoing need depends on the service, arrange the transition as far as possible and explain what will happen to beneficiaries. If a defined purpose has ended, an initiative may close having delivered its full benefit in its time.

Desiring a lasting impact does not require every method to remain forever. A short lesson may have a good effect for years, while an organisation may survive for a long time consuming resources without sufficient service. We seek lasting good and review the means carrying it.

Experienced people can pass on understanding of success and setbacks, making their learning useful to those who come afterwards.

Here, faith-based self-accounting and practical review meet without becoming identical. We ask Allah for acceptance and struggle against showing off, while asking people how they benefited and correcting the work. We preserve obligatory duties and rights and use knowledge and expertise to improve methods. Development thus becomes part of trustworthiness, and follow-up becomes care for those served rather than an endless search for flattering figures.

Conclusion: Good You Can Do Along the Way

You may close this volume without extra money, with time still limited and without solving every problem you know in your home or society. Yet you can leave it with a clearer view of what is already before you: a present right to fulfil, necessary knowledge to learn, an error to stop, and a manageable kindness not to belittle. The path grows from this sincere beginning.

We began with servitude to Allah because a person cannot know their proper direction by separating life from their Lord. We then considered the soundness of heart and action, surrounding rights, benefiting people, knowledge and profession, harmful impact and how to repair it. These meanings overlap within a single day. Life is not a set of closed compartments, one ending before another begins. Your intention, trustworthiness and gentleness may be tested in one service. Fulfilling a family right may teach you something that improves your work with others.

You are not required to become a copy of a man renowned for knowledge, a woman known for generosity, or the founder of an institution with extensive benefit. Consider the abilities Allah has opened to you, the rights He has made binding, and what you can learn. Then choose a lawful path in which to serve sincerely. Rejoice in others' goodness and support it, knowing that opportunities

complement one another and that bounty belongs to Allah, who grants it to whom He wills.

There may be people in your life whose full impact you do not see: a mother who taught you a word, a father who patiently provided for you, a teacher who explained again when you did not understand, or a trustworthy worker who completed a service you barely noticed.

Remembering them shows that you live within the continuation of kindness that preceded you. Gratitude includes praying for its authors, preserving their rights and treating well those you can help today.

When you err, do not protect the image of a person of positive influence at the expense of truth. Return, apologise, restore what you owe, correct what you published and seek help. The sincerity of your return may become good that others learn from, and may prevent recurring harm you had not noticed. Awareness of impact's danger does not call for paralysis. It calls for knowledge that guards initiative, hope that moves towards repentance, and humility that permits review.

Some kindness ends as an action while its fruit remains in someone's life. Other kindness prepares those who will carry good after its author. This brings the next volume's question into view: what remains for a person after death ends their ability to act? How can they care for beneficial knowledge, continuing charity, righteous descendants and other good that reaches them, guided by the Qur'an and

Sunnah? This subject connects with what we have explored here, and its causes begin during life.

For now, you are still on the path. You have this day, with its blessings, duties and opportunities, and a generous Lord from whom to seek assistance and acceptance. Do not require knowledge of every eventual outcome before doing the good made clear to you. Do not allow people's ignorance of your name to stand between you and obedience known to Allah. Act with knowledge, sincerely seek reward, do good as far as you can, and put things right when you err.

O Allah, help us remember You, thank You and worship You well. Reform our hearts and deeds, make us keys to good in ways pleasing to You, and protect us from wronging Your servants and speaking about You without knowledge. O Allah, accept what is correct and sincere, forgive our shortcomings, guide us to repair our errors, and make what we learn evidence for us rather than against us. Forgive those who taught us and treated us kindly, our fathers and mothers, and Muslim men and women.

This book is dedicated as a charitable endowment for the sake of Allah.

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