



## Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge: Not Acting Upon the Knowledge

An explanation of some points from “Obstacles in the Path of Knowledge” (of Shaikh Abdus-Salaam Burjis) by Abu Hakeem Bilaal Davies. Transcribed by Hisham Abu Maryam and Umm Maryam for SalafiPublications.Com, edited and amended by Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq, checked by Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank.

### Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Likewise from the affairs that act as obstacles in the path of the seeker of knowledge is his leaving acting upon the knowledge. For indeed many of the Salaf have mentioned that they used to seek aid upon memorising the Ilm by acting upon it.

Imam Ahmad (rahimahullah) mentioned that never did he write a hadeeth down in his musnad, but that he paid the zakat for that hadeeth. So much so that when he wrote the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) making Hajj and that he got himself cupped for one dinar, so Imam Ahmad made Hajj and got himself cupped for one dinar.

The Salaf understood that the fruit of Ilm is action (and this is why al-Imaam Khateeb al-Baghdaadi wrote his book ‘Iqtidaa ul ‘ilmil ‘Amal ( following knowledge with action)<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> **Editors Note:** From “Fadl Ilm is-Salaf” of al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee:

Abdullah ibn Mas’ud: “Learn, so when you have learnt , then act.”

Az-Zuhree: “The action of one who acts and does not know will not be trusted by the people and the people will not be happy with the saying of an ‘aalim who does not act.”

Sahl ibn ‘Abdullah al-Fustaani: “All the people are intoxicated except the scholars and all the scholars are confused except whoever acts according to his knowledge.”

Sahl ibn ‘Abdullah al-Fustaani: “The world is foolishness and barren except the knowledge and all of knowledge is a proof against him except what is acted upon and all action is useless except with sincerity and sincerity is in great danger until sealed by it (the action).”

Yusuf ibn al Hunain: “With good manners you understand the knowledge and with knowledge your actions are corrected and with the actions wisdom is obtained and with wisdom you understand zuhud (renunciation) and granted the benefit of it and with zuhud comes abandoning the world and with abandoning the world comes longing for the Hereafter and with longing for the Hereafter the Pleasure of AllahAzzawajal is obtained.”

Abu Barzah al-Aslamee (Nadlah ibn Ubayd), accepted Islam before the conquest of Makkah and was present at the conquest. He fought in seven battles, then settled in Basrah. He also fought in Khuraasaan. He reported 46 hadith and he died at Basrah in the year 46AH. He (radiallahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said: "The two feet of the servant of Allah will not move from its place until Allah asks him concerning his life and how he spent it and concerning his Ilm and what he did with his Ilm, his wealth how he earned it and how he spent it."

Abu Darda (rahimahullah) mentioned: "A person will not be an alim until he is a person who is a seeker of knowledge. And you will not be an alim with that Ilm until you are a person who acts upon that Ilm." (Iqtidaa ul Ilmil 'Amal p26)

And Ali (radiallahu anhu) mentioned: "The Ilm seeks for action and it is either responded to (i.e by acting upon it) or it leaves that person who holds it." (Iqtidaa ul Ilmil 'Amal p35-36).

Fudail ibn Iyaad (rahimahullah) mentioned: "A person will not cease being ignorant with the Ilm until he acts upon it. And then when he acts upon it he becomes an alim." (Iqtidaa ul Ilmil 'Amal p.37)

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Maalik ibn Dinar: "When a servant seeks knowledge for practise, his knowledge humbles him and when he seeks it for other than that it increases him in immorality and pride by it."

Abu Hurairah: "The example of knowledge which is not acted upon is like wealth from which nothing is spent in the way of AllahAzzawajal."

Abu Darda: "I am not afraid that it will be said to me: "Oh Aamir what have you learned?", but I am more concerned that it will be said to me: "Oh Aamir, what have you done with what you have learned!"

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz: "Whoever does not consider speech to be part of his action will sin abundantly and whoever acts without knowledge will do more harm than good."

Maalik ibn Dinar: "Indeed I found among the wise sayings: "There is no good for you to know what you do not know while you are not acting upon what you do know, because the likeness of that is as the likeness of a man who gathers firewood, so he ties up a bundle and tries to carry it but he is not able to, so he adds another one to it."

Ata reported: "There was a youth who used to come to the Mother of the Believers (radiallahu-anha) from time to time and ask her and she would narrate to him. So one day he came to her and asked her, so she said: "Oh my son, have you acted yet upon what you have heard from me?" So he said: "No by Allah, Oh my mother", so she said: " Oh my son, then why do you seek increase in Allah's proof against us and against you."

Fudayl ibn Ayyad: "As for hadeeth, it is better that a man does not hear it than that he hears it and does not act upon it."

Sufyaan ath-Thawree: "Would that I had not written down knowledge and would that I would be saved from my knowledge so that it would be even, neither against me nor for me."

Ash-Sha'bee: "Indeed we are not the scholars but we have heard hadeeth so we have reported them. For the scholars are those who when they know, they act."

Shaykh Burjis mentions that to leave acting upon Ilm is of two types: a) Leaving those things which are wajib upon us. (eg. Fajr salat) b) Leaving those things which are mustahab (eg. Tahajjud).

## Benefits From This Lesson

1. Not acting upon knowledge is also one of big obstacles in the path.
2. The Salaf would seek to act upon a hadeeth whenever they wrote it or heard about it. Even in matters that were neither obligatory nor recommended, illustrating their severe concern with “Iqtidaa” and “Ittiba” (i.e. following, imitating).
3. The fruit of knowledge is action.
4. Knowledge will be asked about on the Day of Judgement, what knowledge he had and what did he act upon from it.
5. It is the action which is the knowledge (‘ilm), not the knowledge itself, since the alim is the one who acts upon the knowledge. Knowledge in and of itself is actually ignorance, until one acts upon what it requires.
6. Abandoning acting upon the knowledge occurs by leaving what is obligatory or recommended (wajib or mustahabb).