HOW TO READ THE BOOKS OF THE PEOPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

PROLOGUE

All praise is due to Allaah, the One who sent His Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, and Allaah is sufficient as a witness. I testify that there is no god but Allaah alone and that He has no partner. And I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), may Allaah greatly bless him, his family, and his Companions. And as to what follows,

Seeking knowledge is a lengthy path that is not possible to embark upon except by abandoning play and amusement and approaching it in a serious manner. This is because Allaah the Exalted, the most High, described what He revealed to Muhammad (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), and He (Allaah) is the most truthful in speech, as a weighty word. Allaah the Exalted, the most High says,

> **"Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty word."** [Sooratul-Muzzammil, 73:5]

And this weighty word is the *kitaab* and the *sunnah*. Thus, when it was said to Imaam Maalik Ibn Anas, the Imaam of Darul-Hijrah (Madeenah), "These are easy questions", concerning some questions he could not answer, he replied, "Do not say this, for regardless whether the knowledge is small or big, there exists no such thing as easy because Allaah the Exalted, the most High described it as a weighty word."

This is a very in-depth understanding. It is the first step towards seeking knowledge – that one realises that all knowledge is weighty. Every field (of knowledge) requires that one approaches it wholeheartedly and with an objective mind. So whoever says that this is an easy matter and just passes by it without paying close attention, then such a person will not gain knowledge until all the branches of knowledge are of equal footing (to him/her). Whether it is the generalities (of knowledge), the specifics, the principles or the details. A person must give equal concern to all the aspects of knowledge, whether it is obtaining it, revising it or memorising it. If you leave it, it leaves you, and if you approach, it

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accommodates you. As the famous saying states, "Knowledge is a thing that if you give it all of yourself it gives you some of itself, and if you give some of yourself you will gain nothing of it." Practical experience proves this. Hence, I titled this lecture, 'How to Read the Books of the People of Knowledge.' This is a very important topic because many people have read different types of books, and a lot of them complain that they have not obtained firmly grounded knowledge to the extent that they can feel satisfied (with themselves) for all the years that they have exerted in seeking knowledge. Perhaps some of them have attended classes of the people of knowledge, they may have even written research papers or wrote books. However, within themselves they are aware that they have not attained knowledge whereby they can clearly distinguish matters. Thus, because of this problem, this lecture came about. For one must have a structured methodology when reading the books of the people of knowledge. And whoever does not tread upon a structured methodology that he can resort to, he will leave the clear path and adopt conflicting ones.

THE EVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE

If one were to look at the books that are present in our times, one would discover that there are tens of thousands of them in many different subjects. But is there great knowledge as is reflected in the great number of these books? The answer to this question was given by the rightly guided *khalifah* 'Alee Ibn Abee Taalib (*radiyallaahu anhu*), when he said, "Knowledge is a small dot magnified by the ignorant ones." He meant that the basis of the knowledge that the Companions (*radiyallaahu anhum*) referred to was relatively small (just the understanding of the *kitaab* and the *sunnah*). This knowledge was relatively little with regards to the many problems that began to appear during the time of 'Alee (*radiyallaahu anhu*). This is because as time progresses; the more people become distanced from the period of the early Muslims (*salafus-saalih*), the more the need for knowledge and books increases so that people can understand (their religion).

It is because of the presence of ignorance and its people that many books were written. By doing this, many of the ignorant ones were enlightened and many of those who went astray were guided. Likewise, one finds that the books during the initial stages of Islaam were very little, then it gradually increased. The first books to be written were those of *hadeeth* after the complete compilation of the Qur'aan . Then the books of *''aqeedah* came when the different groups began to appear like the *khawaarij* and the *murji'ah*. These books (of *''aqeedah*) were found either within the works of the people of *hadeeth* (like al-Bukharee, Muslim, etc.) or in the form of treatises, (and things evolved like this) until each Islaamic science had many books. So therefore, if we would like to establish a standardised methodology for reading the books of the people of knowledge, then we will have to divide this (methodology) into two broad categories.

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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR READING BOOKS

I am going to mention some general guidelines that are applicable for reading any kind of book, whether it is the books of *''aqeedah*, *tafseer*, *fiqh* etc. But first of all it must be known that Islaamic knowledge is divided into two main categories:

1.   Knowledge that is sought as an end in of itself

2.   Knowledge that is sought as a means to an end

The knowledge that is sought due to its intrinsic nature is the knowledge wherein one is able to comprehend the Book of Allaah and the *sunnah* of his Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). Those (who posses this knowledge) are the ones who are praised in the *ayah*,

> **"Allaah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge."** [Sooratul-Mujadilah, 58:11]

Meaning that they understand the Book of Allaah and the *sunnah* of his Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as it should be understood. Knowledge of the Qur'aan and the *sunnah* consists of *at-tawheed* and matters of *halaal* and *haraam*. Therefore, this issue in fact goes back to two types of knowledge – *at-tawheed* which is actually *''aqeedah*, and matters of *halaal* and *haraam* (i.e. *fiqh*). These two types of knowledge are aimed at in of itself, because by (knowledge of) *at-tawheed* one achieves sincerity in his worship of Allaah, and by (knowledge of) *fiqh* one is able to execute the commands of Allaah and abstain from His prohibitions. For Allaah the Exalted, the most High has made this *deen* based upon information and commands, therefore believing in the information is considered *''aqeedah* (creed), and fulfilling His command is considered action. Allaah the Exalted, the most High states,

> **"And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice."**
> [Sooratul-An'aam, 6:115]

Truth as in what He informs of, and justice as in His commands and prohibitions. Thus, the knowledge of *at-tawheed* and *fiqh* is sought for its innate nature. The other branches of knowledge such as Arabic grammar, principles of *fiqh*, the science of *hadeeth*, *seerah* etc. are all sought as a means to an end and not as end in of itself. Because when a person reads these books, he reads them in order to arrive at the knowledge of *''aqeedah* and the knowledge of *fiqh*.

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READ BOOKS IN STAGES

One must know that books from any science whether it is books of *tafseer*, *hadeeth*, *fiqh*, *'aqeedah* etc. are divided into the *'matoon'* or the basic, abridged texts, the intermediary level books and the books of detailed explanation. Consequently, the one who delves into the detailed books before the basic ones has indeed missed a very important point in establishing the proper methodology of seeking knowledge. The abridged books serve a purpose, which is to establish the foundations of knowledge, and any building as is known, needs a foundation to be laid before it can be raised up. The basic or abridged books pave the way for the intermediary level books, and the intermediary level books pave the way for the detailed ones. Therefore, the one who is not proficient in the basic books should not delve into the detailed ones, because the function of the detailed books is to clarify what may be difficult to understand in the basic ones. Likewise, it is not very pleasing that we hear from some rudimentary level students of knowledge when they say, "I read *Fathul-Baree*," or "I read *al-Mughnee* ", or "I read *al-Majmoo Sharhul-Muhadhab*," or "I read *al-Muhala*," and so forth.

This is not admirable because even though they read these books, the end result will be a lack of attainment. Furthermore, the information such a person attains will be scattered in his mind, unable to link and organise the knowledge he posses. Therefore, in order to establish a proper foundation, one must begin with the abridged or basic books, then the intermediary level books and finally the books of detailed explanation. However, if one would like to research an issue, then refer to any book - basic or detailed, but just keep in mind that when it comes to seeking knowledge one must build a foundation by learning the things that are elementary before the advanced issues. How excellent was what al-Muwafiq Ibn Qudaamah did when he authored books in *fiqh* that exemplified this methodology. He wrote the book, "*al-umdah*" which is an abridged book for the beginner, then "*al-Muqnee*" which is a bit longer than "*al-umdah*", then "*al-kafee*" which is for the intermediate student and also a bit longer than "*al-muqnee*," and finally for the advanced student, "*al-mughnee* (all books of Hanbalee *fiqh*). I remember one time I heard al-'Allamah Abdur-Razzaaq al-Afeefee (May Allaah have mercy upon him) say, "Indeed al-Muwafiq Ibn Qudaamah (May Allaah have mercy upon him) preceded the present day educational system, he made "*al-umdah*" for the one in elementary school, then "*al-muqnee*" for the middle school student, then "*al-kafee*" for the high school student and "*al-mughnee*" for those at a collegiate level. The point I am trying to emphasise is that it is very important that one should differentiate between reading to establish a foundation and reading just to be informed about certain issues. I gave an important lecture that has been recorded about this issue entitled: "The Difference between the Essentials and the Anecdotes of Knowledge." Knowledge has essentials by which it is built upon and the anecdotes are that which help to support the essential knowledge. Hence, whoever immerses himself in the anecdotes and abandons the essentials of knowledge will not gather anything (substantial).

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Rather, such a person will know a lot of stories and have a lot of information; however, he will not be able to discuss an issue of *fiqh* or *'aqeedah* with clarity. Therefore, the proper methodology is to read the basic, general books, and then to move on to the more detailed ones.

BE FAMILIAR WITH THE AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

The reader must pay special attention to the *madhhab* of the author. The scholars wrote books, however they wrote them according to their *madhhab* and educational background. There were those who were Hanbalee, those who were As-Shafi'ee, those who were Maalikee and those who were Hanafee. Likewise, there were those who very knowledgeable of the *sunnah*, there were those who mostly had correct opinions and few mistakes, there were those who mixed *bid'ah* with *sunnah* and so forth. Therefore, knowing the background of an author is very important before reading his book, because the reader can be influenced by the author while he is least aware of his background. For example, some students of knowledge always give precedence to what is in the books of the explanation of *hadeeth* over what is in the extensive books of *fiqh*. This is because, according to them, those who explain the books of *hadeeth* are more independent-minded and further removed from *taqleed* (blind following) than those who explain the books of *fiqh*.

Thus, such a person thinks that the disposition of the explainer of the books of *hadeeth* has more weight than the disposition of those who explain the books of *fiqh*, and this is not always correct. As a matter of fact, we found that the inclinations of those who explain the books of *hadeeth* are often based upon their *madhhab*. For example, one finds that Imaam an-Nawawee in his explanation of Saheeh Muslim gives more weight (to an opinion) according to what the Shafi'ee *madhhab* considers the strongest opinion. Also, if one observes how he derives his rulings, one would realise that he derives his rulings based upon the Shafi'ee principles of *fiqh*. So a person looks and notices that Imaam an-Nawawee uses an authentic *hadeeth* to give precedence to a particular opinion, therefore this person agrees with him (Imaam An-Nawawee) based upon fact that the *hadeeth* is authentic. This may be a correct approach in most instances; however, in some instances this approach can be incorrect. Sometimes we find he (Imaam an-Nawawee) gives more weight to a particular opinion whereas the correct one may be otherwise. How is that? Because the authenticity of a *hadeeth* is not sufficient to establish the validity of an opinion in matters of *fiqh*. To the contrary, and more importantly, it is to look and see from what standpoint that scholar arrived at that particular ruling. I mean, how did he arrive at this particular ruling based upon his understanding of the *hadeeth*. This in actuality goes back to the principles of *fiqh*. For example, one finds in his book '*riyadhus-saaliheen*', he has a chapter entitled: "The Undesirability of Swearing in the Name of Anything besides Allaah" wherein he uses as his evidence the *hadeeth*, "He who swears by anyone or anything other than Allaah, has indeed committed an act of Kufr or Shirk."[1] And the *hadeeth*, "He who swears by an *amanah* (trust)

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[1] at-Tirmidhee: *saheeh*

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is not one of us."[2] So a person notices that Imaam An-Nawawee considers it '*makrooh*' or disliked to do such an act based on (his understanding of) the *hadeeth*. However, there is a big difference between saying something is *makrooh* and the statement of the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), "He who swears by anyone or anything other than Allaah, has indeed committed an act of *kufr* or *shirk*."

Moreover, it an established principle with the foremost scholars of the people of knowledge, that the statement of the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), "He is not from us whoever does such and such" indicates that this act is prohibited. The majority of scholars of the principles of *fiqh* also confirm this rule. Therefore, putting a heading on a chapter is one thing, but how this evidence is used is another. If we were to discuss with Imaam An-Nawawee why he considers this *makrooh*, we do not know what he will say. But I think his interpretation of the *hadeeth* will be based upon a principle of *fiqh* from the *Shafi'ee madhhab* that considers this type of *shirk* to be a minor one.

The point I am trying to make is that one should pay attention to the difference between a ruling on a matter and how the evidences were used to arrive at this ruling. Therefore, as a general principle when reading the books of the people of knowledge, one should pay attention to the methodology of the author. Simply because one author uses an authentic *hadeeth* as proof for the validity of his opinion, and another lacks any evidence, means that this author's opinion is actually the strongest one in that matter – this in very rare indeed (that those of opposing view lack any evidence). These issues are referred to as matters of differences of opinion and our discussion is not about this. Verily, what one finds is that the differences occurs using the same evidence. One scholar views it this way, and the other views it another way. Therefore, when should an opinion be considered the weightiest (among differing opinions)? If it is that the opposing viewpoints to the first opinion are less than the opposing viewpoints to the second opinion (then this is most likely the strongest opinion in this matter). For example, whenever one reads the books of *fiqh*, one finds that two scholars arrive at differing conclusions based upon the same *ayah* or *hadeeth*. So therefore, which of these opinions would be the strongest, the first or the second? This is not a matter of choice based upon whim and fancies. Rather, we give more weight to the opinion that has the least objections to it. Moreover, one should not think that of the many issues of differences of opinion, the strongest opinion is the strongest in the absolute sense, i.e. one opinion is completely correct and the other is completely incorrect. This rarely occurs in matters of knowledge. More accurately, what happens is that one scholar uses a *hadeeth* or an *ayah* to prove this and the next one uses the same to prove that, however, the objections to opinion number one is less than the objections to opinion number two. Thus, the one that has the least objections to it would be considered the stronger opinion than the other which has more objections to it.

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[2] Aboo Daawood: *saheeh*

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EVERY DISCIPLINE HAS ITS LANGUAGE

A student of knowledge, whenever reading the books of the people of knowledge, must try to understand the matters therein according to the language of the people of knowledge. For every discipline has its Language. For example, the one who reads the *fatwaa* of Shaykhul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) in a similar manner that he reads and understands a newspaper or a magazine, such a person will indeed make many mistakes in his understanding of the intent of Shaykhul-Islaam's words. This is because the people of knowledge, regardless of the different eras that they lived in, they wrote the knowledge according to the language of that particular branch of knowledge, and they did not write it based on the colloquial dialect that was commonly spoken in their times. This was done so that the knowledge can be continuously passed on; thus the first will understand it just as the last. Therefore, each branch of knowledge has its own terminology and language that must be understood within the repository context that embodies the language. For the language is the reservoir for the meaning of the words. Hence, it is not behoving that an individual understands what he reads based on notions acquired from the past, because if he understands the works of the scholars on this basis, his understanding will differ with what they intended. Thus, the student of knowledge – whether he teaches or studies, should strive to express knowledge-based matters in accordance with the language of its people. Because if he discusses knowledge-based matters contrary to the language of its people, neither will he be fully connecting with those who preceded him, nor will he fully obtain what is ahead of him. The previously mentioned points were general guidelines (on what to look for and pay attention to when reading the books of the scholars), now we will go to the specifics.

HOW TO READ BOOKS OF 'AQEEDAH

al-'aqeedah, how does one read the books of creed? *'Aqeedah* is based upon clarity, and it is the explanation of the pillars of *eemaan*.

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do)
the believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers."
[Sooratul-Baqarah, 2:285]

Therefore, the pillars of *eemaan* are six easy pillars that the *fitrah* naturally accepts. However, when misconceptions became rampant in this regard, the people of knowledge began to write books of *'aqeedah*. The books of *'aqeedah* written by the *salaf* can be divided into two categories:

1. Books that discussed the issue of *'aqeedah* in a general form.

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2. Books that discussed issues of *'aqeedah* in a detailed manner. Some students of knowledge hold that it is more beneficial to read the detailed books of *'aqeedah* (before the general ones).

Thus, they go directly to the '*fataawaa*' of Ibn Taymiyyah, they immediately read 'al-Eemaan' by Ibn Manda or his other book 'at-Tawheed', they go directly to 'Ash-Sharee'ah' by Imaam al-Ajuree, or al-Lilaakaa'ee's book, and so forth. There is no doubt that these books give a firm grounding in the *madhhab* of the *salaf*. However the *madhhab* of the *salaf* and their statements are dispersed whereby the early scholars (*al-mutaqadeemin*) did not write their books in a clear, organised, structured manner. Hence, the later generation of scholars from the people of the *sunnah* like Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qudaamah and others like them, came after and summarised these books and matters of *'aqeedah*. Therefore, the path to the detailed books of *'aqeedah* is to understand the abridged books of *'aqeedah* like 'al-Wasitiyyah' and 'al-Hamawiyyah' by Shaykhul-Islaam, 'Lumatil i'tiqaad' by Ibn Qudaamah, and so on. Thus, if one has a competent understanding of these books, one can refer to the books of the early scholars based on three approaches:

The First Approach

The first approach is wherein one refers to detailed books after having studied an issue of *'aqeedah* in the abridged versions. For example, one comes across the issue of *eemaan* in *'aqeedah*, is *eemaan* a statement, belief and action, or is it just a statement and belief without action? This is a very well-known matter of disagreement between the people of *hadeeth* and the *murji'ah* of the *fuqahah*. The abridged books of *'aqeedah* will give a glimpse into the differences regarding this matter, but if one wants the specifics, he has to go the detailed books. However, before going to the books of the early scholars, one should be proficient in the books of the later generation of scholars. This is because the books of the early scholars are very profound. So if a person reads the books of the early scholars without being aware of the principles that the later generation of scholars laid down regarding *'aqeedah*, he will indeed have huge deficiencies in his understanding of the methodology and *'aqeedah* of *ahlus-sunnah*. For example, what is reported in some of the books of *ahlus-sunnah* about al-Imaam Aboo Haneefah, may Allaah have mercy upon him and elevate his level in *jannah*. If a person reads such books of the early scholars, he would find that they mentioned things about this Imaam that the later generation of scholars did not mention. Rather, they abandoned and avoided such matters altogether. Hence, one does not see in the works of Shaykhul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah such an unfavourable mention of al-Imaam Aboo Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy upon him). In spite of the fact that the books of the early scholars mention that he did this, he did that... and so forth. They abandoned such issues because it was a matter that had its respective time and place. Thus, Shaykhul-Islaam wrote *'Raf al malaam fee a'Imaamtul a'laam'* (Exonerating the Great Scholars from Blame), and from amongst them he defended al-Imaam Aboo Haneefah, notwithstanding the fact that his (Aboo Haneefah's) statement regarding *eemaan* is well known. However, as it has been said regarding his honour, one should not hold these matters against him.

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Were a person to read the books of the early scholars before that of the later generation of them, there will be deficiencies in his understanding of their works.

Where do these deficiencies originate? These deficiencies originate from the fact that if a person is not aware of the particular environment that the statements of the *salaf* were made in, he will fail to properly understand their statements. This means a person must be aware of the circumstances of that particular time, such as the statements of the *salaf*, the schools of thought, the *fitnah*, and so forth. Hence, for example, when Ash-Shaykh 'Abdullaah Ibn Hasan (may Allaah have mercy upon him) and those *mashayikh* from Makkah who were with him, decided to print '*kitabus-sunnah*' by 'Abdullah, son of Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy upon them), they did not see any problem in eliminating a complete chapter related to Aboo Haneefah and his followers. This was done to bring about a *share'ah* benefit that agrees with the methodology of *ahlus-sunnah wal jama'ah,* hence they took out a complete chapter containing criticisms about Aboo Haneefah and his followers. Is this removal considered failing to fulfil the trust, as some claim? Absolutely not, to the contrary, this is actually fulfilling the trust. This is because the trust we are required to fulfil is not the obligation of complete acceptance of what are in these books. Indeed, the real duty is to strive so that the *ummah* will remain united in its *'aqeedah* and brotherly love. So if the relevance of those statements disappeared in time, then repeating them serves no benefit for the religion. And no doubt, this is a very important point to comprehend.

Some of the statements of the *salaf* regarding the innovators and the people of desires have its circumstantial relevance during the early period of Islaam, and these statements may not be applicable in our times. However, you find some people taking these general statements and applying them to a condition that differs with the environment those statements were applicable in. But if they were to see the statements of the great Imaams and the foremost scholars from *ahlus-sunnah*, they would realise that they contradict these scholars in their application (of their statements). This point was brought up just to emphasise the importance of reading and having a proper understanding of the books of *'aqeedah* by the later generation of scholars from *ahlus-sunnah* before delving into the books of the earlier ones. For immersion into the books (*'aqeedah*) of the *salaf*, without knowing the principles the contemporary scholars of *ahlus-sunnah* laid down will result in a defective understanding of the methodology of the *salaf*. And there are many examples of this that might need a longer time to explain.

The Second Approach

The second level of approach is to know the incorrect statements from its source of origin. Now this is for the advanced student of knowledge and not the beginner. This means that one should be proficient in both the abridged books of *'aqeedah* and the statements of the *salaf*. After having done this, one moves on to the knowing the refuted statements from the books of origin. For it is not sufficient to accept a refutation of a person without having

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heard or read that person's statement, except if the transmitter (of this refutation) is a trustworthy person. This is without a doubt sufficient, however reading the book this statement is taken from helps to clarify the intent behind that particular statement. Sometimes one finds (in the books of refutation), for example, 'this person said such and such', 'the *asha'irah* have this opinion regarding that matter', and so on. However, if one examines their books, one would find within it details that this particular author (who is doing the refuting) did not mention, so the reader understands (this concept that is being refuted) outside of its proper context, thus the group's ideology is misconstrued. Yes, we do not defend the people of innovation, however Allaah the Exalted, the most High made it obligatory upon us that we do not let the dislike of a people divert us from being just.

> **"And let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice."** [Sooratul-Ma'idah, 5:8]

The one who does not let his emotions cloud his thinking should be even more impartial is his assessment and opinion of knowledge based issues. This is because (obtaining) knowledge requires that one is unbiased, and the unbiased person is the one who approaches Allaah with a pure heart. So one examines their statements wherein one comes across a refutation of those who refuted them that says, 'this point they accuse of us is not mentioned in our books.'

However, one would have the upper hand because one can prove that it is actually mentioned in such and such book. To give a common example we often use: the *asha'irah* and the *matrudiyyah* perceive that the objective of *tawheed* is to confirm the *tawheedur-ruboobiyyah* (Allaah being single in His Lordship), and not the *tawheedul-'uboodiyyah* (singling out Allaah for worship). That is – whoever believes in the existence of Allaah the Exalted, the most High is the One who is able to originate and He is the Creator, then this is sufficient for one's actualisation of 'Laa Ilaaha Ilallaah' So if one of them comes and says, "this is not correct, our scholars (from the *asha'irah* or *matrudiyyah*) do not say this. Rather, you all just repeat the words your scholars say of which none of you know its meaning."

However, one can say to them, that in your abridged books of *'aqeedah* like '*as-sanoosiyyah*" which is considered the primer for *'asharee 'aqeedah*, therein it states, '*Fa alillahu huwa al mustaghnee 'amma sewaahu, al muftakiroo ilayhi kulu maa 'adaahu ilallaah.*' That is, 'Laa ilaaha ilallaah' means Allaah is self-sufficient of every being, and every being besides Him is in need of Him. Hence, one has established the clear evidences. Therefore, the student of knowledge must refer back to the original books if they would like to write, especially if it is a refutation, so that the people can see statements as they are, while simultaneously being trustworthy in his report. However, I repeat, this should only be done by the one is proficient in matters of *'aqeedah*. Neither is it proper for the beginner to refer to their books, nor do I advise you all to refer to their books. But if one wants to do a refutation in the correct manner, then he must adopt this methodology.

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The Third Approach

The third and final approach is to read the *fataawaa* of the scholars in *'aqeedah*. Many of the issues they discuss are theoretical. So who are the ones that are able to apply these theories to real life situations? The foremost people of knowledge and the ones firmly grounded in it (are the ones that are able to apply these theories to real life situations). They take these theoretical matters and apply it to reality. Hence, the third level of approach in reading the books of *'aqeedah* is to refer to the *fataawaa* so that one can make a connection between what is present in the books of *'aqeedah* and what is current.

We could have extended this lecture, but perhaps the general guidelines that we discussed at the beginning of the lecture can be applied to the other branches of knowledge such as matters of *fiqh*, grammar and so forth. Finally I ask Allaah the Exalted, the most High, to inspire me and you to that which is good and to the point, to protect us from our shortcomings and to make our accuracies exceed our mistakes. O Allaah I ask You to forgive us our sins and faults, I ask You to forgive us all. O Allaah have mercy upon us and have mercy upon our parents, indeed You are the most merciful of those who show mercy.