The first hadith in Imam an-Nawawi's collection, "Forty Hadith," is a foundational text emphasizing the importance of intention in actions. It states, "Actions are but by intention, and each person will have what they intended". This means that the validity and reward of any deed are determined by the underlying intention behind it.

Here's a more detailed explanation:

* **Intention as the basis:**

The hadith highlights that the core of any action lies in the intention behind it. If the intention is solely for Allah's sake, the action is considered valid and rewarded by Allah.

* **Worldly vs. Divine:**

The hadith provides an example of migration (hijra). If someone migrates with the intention of pleasing Allah, their migration is accepted. However, if the intention is driven by worldly desires like acquiring wealth or marrying a specific person, the action is judged based on that worldly intention.

* **Sincerity (Ikhlas):**

This hadith is often associated with the concept of sincerity (Ikhlas) in worship and good deeds. Sincerity means performing actions purely for Allah's pleasure, without any desire for worldly recognition or reward.

* **Wide-ranging applicability:**

This hadith is considered a cornerstone of Islamic teachings because it applies to all aspects of life. Every action, from the smallest to the largest, is subject to this principle.