



Importance of Seeking Knowledge

Contents

One: Greeting.....	3
Two: Importance of Seeking Islamic Knowledge	4
Three: Poem Attributed to ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib	7
Four: Be From Four	9

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

One: Greeting

Welcome, O' students of knowledge.

My brothers and sisters, this series is directed for the students of knowledge programme at AMAU. I want to go through five main points and I ask Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to make it a source of benefit for myself and every one of you. I ask Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to reward the brothers who have been working excessively to put this together. May Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) bestow His never ending mercy onto them He is able of this. My brothers and sisters, this topic has benefitted me a lot whilst preparing it and I hope and pray that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) gives me the strength and ability to follow this.

Two: Importance of Seeking Islamic Knowledge

The first point I would like to go through is the importance of seeking Islamic knowledge. This will not be discussed in great detail because many know the importance of knowledge and have heard these many times. There are many lectures regarding the importance of seeking knowledge and I hope that you all have listened to these reminders.

Since we are talking about seeking knowledge and the methodology at AMAU, it is worthy of me to mention the importance of seeking knowledge.

We are all in need of knowledge more than we are in need of food and drink, especially during these times of great trials and tribulations.

Imām Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

"النَّاسُ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ أَحْوَجُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَى الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ"

"People are more in need of knowledge than food and drink"¹

This is because a person needs to eat and drink once or twice a day, but a person requires knowledge every second and minute of their life. If one is driving, then they need to know how to drive. If one is crossing a road, then they need to know how to cross the road. Therefore, one is in need of the knowledge which they require throughout the day.

Knowledge is a vital element of the human being. Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) said:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

"Are those who know equal to those who do not know? None will be mindful 'of this' except people of reason."²

Let us understand this question from our Lord; Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Can both be equal? Everyone will respond with a no, because it is a rhetorical question. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) knows that they are not the same. Ignorance and knowledge can never be equivocated.

‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ); the noble companion and Prophet’s cousin said a very powerful statement:

"كفى بالعلم شرفاً أن يدعيه من لا يحسنه، ويفرح به إذا نسب إليه، وكفى بالجهل ذمماً أن يتبرأ منه من هو فيه"

"It is enough of a virtue of knowledge; that it is claimed by the one who has not perfected it and they are pleased when they are attributed to it. It is enough of a degradation of ignorance; that the one who has it frees themselves from it."³

¹ Miftāh Dār al-Sa’ādah 1/119

² al-Zumar: 9

³ Tadhkirah al-Sāmi’ wal-Mutakalim p.10

Therefore, knowledge and ignorance are not the same. Nowhere in the world can they be the same. This is not the case in the academic world, then how can they be the same when it comes to knowledge regarding the religion of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) said:

﴿يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾

“Allah will elevate those of you who are faithful, and ‘raise’ those gifted with knowledge in rank. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.”⁴

Allāh raises the station of the believers above and beyond the disbelievers. Within the believers, Allāh raises the people of knowledge. Therefore, the believers and not like the disbelievers, and the people of knowledge are not like the ordinary believers. Rather, Allāh raises the station of the people of knowledge higher.

I cannot go through all of the virtues of knowledge. There is a book called: “*Miftāh Dār al-Sa’ādah*” by Ibn al-Qayyim. In this book, Ibn al-Qayyim mentions one hundred and fifty-three virtues of knowledge in three volumes. I have mentioned two verses and now I am going to mention one of the greatest hadīth which summarises the virtue of knowledge.

It has been narrated on the authority of Abī Dardā (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

"مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ طَالِبَ الْعِلْمِ يَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الْحَيَاتَانِ فِي الْمَاءِ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ هُمْ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا إِنَّمَا وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ"

“Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allāh will make easy for them a path to paradise. The angels lower their wings in approval of the seeker of knowledge. Verily, that which is in the heavens and earth seeks forgiveness for the scholars even the fish in the sea. The virtue of a scholar over a worshipper is similar to the virtue of the moon over the remaining stars on a night when it is full [the moon]. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion”⁵

This hadīth has five virtues:

1. Path to Jannah

Pay attention, one taking a path to seek knowledge includes; joining a programme to study the religion of Allāh, joining a halaqah of Qur’ān, studying various sciences, then one becomes a student of knowledge. One chooses to become a student of knowledge. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did not mention seeking knowledge, but it

⁴ al-Mujādilah: 11

⁵ Musnad Ahmad 21715, Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3641, Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2682, and Sunan Ibn Mājah 223. It is Hasan due to supporting evidence.

encompasses even a little bit of knowledge, then the reward which Allāh will give is that Allāh will make the path to Jannah easy for them.

Look, those who have taken this path in this world then “the reward is equal to the deed”. Whatever one does in this world will be recompensed in the hereafter. Therefore, when one takes this path to seek knowledge then Allāh will make easy the path for Jannah for them. May Allāh make us from the people He takes to Jannah. This is the first virtue from the hadīth. We should ask ourselves, why are we in this world? What do we want from this world? Is it not Jannah? By taking this path to seek knowledge one will be upon the path to Jannah – In Shā Allāh.

2. The Angels will place their wings over the student of knowledge

The angels of Allāh are not ordinary creations of Allāh. We are talking about Angels, this includes Jibrīl, Mikā'īl and other great Angels. They place their wings over the students of knowledge because they are pleased with what that person is doing. The Angels will place their wings to protect the student of knowledge because of what they are seeking. They are pleased and happy with what the person is looking for. This is another virtue. The student has these Angels that are protecting them from all directions.

3. The inhabitants of the heavens and earth will seek forgiveness for the scholar

The third virtue is that the hadīth mentions the scholar. This demonstrates that the one who seeks knowledge and reaches a high level becomes a scholar. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed us that the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth seek forgiveness for the scholar; even the creatures in the ocean. This includes the Angels who are high in the sky and the righteous slaves of Allāh on this earth who will all ask Allāh to forgive the scholar. Many people ask scholars and people of knowledge to supplicate for them. However, the scholar is already receiving that - In Shā Allāh.

4. The position of a scholar

The virtue of a scholar over a worshipper is similar to the virtue of the moon over the remaining stars on a night when it is full [the moon]. This demonstrates that Allāh has given the scholar a higher station than the worshipper who may engage in worship day and night. The worshipper is like the stars and the scholar is the moon. This does not mean that the scholar does not worship Allāh a lot. In later episodes, we will discuss how the Salaf described a scholar, the attributes of a scholar and the reality of knowledge.

5. Inheritors of the Prophet

The scholars are inheritors of the Prophet. The inheritance of the Prophet was not money but rather it is knowledge. Anybody who takes this inheritance has taken a great portion.

These benefits have been extracted from the explanation of this hadīth by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī (رحمة الله). This is a very important to read and it will provide the student with many gems and jewels. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī wrote the following books; “*Jāmi' al-Ulūm al-Hikam*”, “*Fath al-Bārī*” which was an explanation of “*Sahīh al-Bukhārī*”. He used this name prior to Ibn Hajar (رحمة الله) and some scholars mention that he took it from Ibn Rajab.

Three: Poem Attributed to ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib

"النَّاسُ فِي جِهَةِ التَّمَثِيلِ أَكْفَاءُ *** أَبُوهُمْ آدَمُ وَالْأُمُّ حَوَاءُ
نَفْسٌ كَنَفْسٍ وَأَرْوَاحٌ مُشَاكِلَةٌ *** وَأَعْظَمُ خُلِقَتْ فِيهِمْ وَأَعْضَاءُ
فَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَصْلِهِمْ حَسَبٌ *** يُفَاخِرُونَ بِهِ فَالطِّينُ وَالْمَاءُ
مَا الْفَضْلُ إِلَّا لِلْأَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّهُمْ *** عَلَى الْهُدَى لِمَنْ اسْتَهْدَى أَدْلَاءُ
وَقَدْرُ كُلِّ امْرِيٍّ مَا كَانَ يُحْسِنُهُ *** وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَى الْأَفْعَالِ أَسْمَاءُ"

“At face value, all people seem equal *** their Father is Ādam and their mother Hawā

Every soul resembling the other *** with bones and organs in their bodies

If they have for them from their origin virtue *** and they take pride, though they are [composed of] earth and water

There is no virtue except for the people of knowledge, they are *** upon true guidance and guiding those who seek guidance

A person’s worth is only in that which He perfects *** and for men are names for that which they do”⁶

We are all the same, regardless of our colour, region, and land. Some of us claim to be good due to being from a certain country or being a certain colour. This is incorrect, the reality is that everyone is from one man and therefore we are the same. Each soul resembles the other. We all feel pain and are made from cartilage, blood etc. If one tries to boast and say: “Do you know what tribe I am from?” Would one really want to praise themselves and brag from being from a certain Land? A specific sort of dust? Is this where one really looks to honour from?

‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said that there is no virtue except with the people of knowledge. If one is really looking for honour then it has to come from that which is greater than the clay and water that one was created from, which is knowledge.

Thus, the Prophets are the most knowledgeable people and that is why they are higher than everyone else. Let us reflect on why Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) instructed the Angels – who are a noble and great creation – to prostrate to Ādam?

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

“He taught Adam the names of all things, then He presented them to the angels and said: Tell Me the names of these, if what you say is true?”⁷

⁶ Jāmi’ al-Bayān al-‘Ilm 1/218

⁷ al-Baqarah: 31

Ādam surpassed the Angels in knowledge and the Angels were instructed to prostrate to Ādam (ﷺ). Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) demonstrated to the Angels what Ādam knows and what they do not know. This does not mean that one can prostrate to someone who is more knowledgeable to them, but it shows how Allāh raised Ādam over the Angels. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) described the Angels as:

﴿لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾

“who never disobey whatever Allah orders—always doing as commanded”⁸

Therefore, virtue is truly with the people of knowledge, those who guide people to the truth, based upon knowledge and insight.

‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) then goes on to say, that the A person’s worth is only in that which He perfects, that which the person can contribute and offer. We should always ask; what do we possess? What do we have? What can we offer? What can we bring to the table? What do we know? What can we contribute? What makes us worthy and valuable? These are vital questions.

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

"الْعِلْمُ ذَكَرٌ يُحِبُّهُ ذُكُورَةُ الرِّجَالِ وَيَكْرَهُهُ مُؤَنَّثُهُمْ"

“Knowledge is masculine; it is loved by the masculine men and disliked by the feminine men”⁹

Some may not understand what he means by this. A man is different from a male. Many people are looking to be masculine but when it comes to seeking knowledge they are lazy and do not tread towards seeking knowledge. If one claims to be masculine and that they possess mental and physical strength; then let us see how eager and determined they are to learn.

⁸ al-Tahrīm: 6

⁹ Jāmi’ al-Bayān al-‘Ilm 1/251

Four: Be From Four

Be from one of the four and do not be from the fifth:

1. A scholar
2. A student
3. A listener
4. A lover of knowledge; speaking highly of the scholars and the people of knowledge, not ridiculing or belittling them
5. Hating the people of knowledge and showing animosity and hatred towards them

This was an episode regarding the importance of seeking knowledge. Before I conclude, I want everyone to remember the last point I mentioned. Some of those who have signed up have a goal and objective to become a scholar; this is the best and greatest goal. Others are going to be students of knowledge and some will be listeners. Each one of these, will gradually move to the stage above. The fourth category are those who love knowledge and have a passion and spark in their heart to sign up and be around people of knowledge; they may hear a hadīth or two which really resonates with their heart and mind. All of those that I have mentioned - In Shā Allāh - will benefit from the AMAU programme and it has something structured for them. Our brother, Shaykh Muhammad Tim Humble will break down each program that will be studied in the AMAU; which the student of knowledge program is within. This is the program for the scholar and student of knowledge. There is also a program for the one who wants to listen and a program for the one who loves knowledge. These will all drive the person to move towards the student of knowledge program.

Editor's Note

These notes have been compiled by a student and have not been comprehensively reviewed by the teacher.



AMAUACADEMY



www.amauacademy.com