

Why Should I Study?

Muhammad al-Shareef

Many years ago in Uzbekistan, a baby boy was born blind. His Mother, the strong Mu'minah that she was, did not lose sight of He who had the Power to cure him. She prayed and prayed for her sons sight. And within a few years the boy regained his eyes.

She was widowed, the boy an orphan. She traveled with him to Makkah so that he could receive an Islamic Education. She arranged that he attend the circles of the scholars, and in those circles, he began excelling in the science of Hadeeth. He traveled to distant villages in search of the most authentic sayings of Rasul Allah (pbuh). He would pray two raka'at before accepting a Hadeeth. His mother named him: Muhammad ibn Isma'il. And many of us know him today by the book he compiled, the book that stands after the Qur'an in authenticity: Saheeh Al-Imam Al-Bukhari!

In another land, in another time, chilly Baghdad winds would wake up another boy. Much before Fajr, his mother would bundle him in warm shawls and escort him through the darkness, making sure he reached the Masjid safely. After Fajr, she would wait for him as he read Hadeeth to the biggest scholars of the land. Then, long after the sun had come up, she would meet him outside and together they would walk home. She was a strong mother indeed, for her son grew up to become an Imam of the Muslim Ummah, an Imam by the name of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. (Manaaqib Ahmad, by Ibn Al-Jowzee)

Imam Suyuti authored his first book, Tafseer Bismillaah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem, when he was in grade 2!

Dear brothers and sisters, why should we try to follow in the footsteps of these many other stars of Islam? The information that we shall in sha' Allah learn is not like anything else. This knowledge is the law of Allah and the inheritance of the Prophets. It is our duty to preserve and protect the estate of Rasul Allah (pbuh), something that cannot happen without there being serious and sincere brothers and sisters spending long days and nights reading, reflecting, and teaching others.

Every Islamic revival that takes place is built on something. Some revivals are built on emotions, others on politics. Do you know which shall remain firm when the wind of woe blows? It shall be the one that was built on sound knowledge of the words of Allah and the Sunnah of Rasul Allah.

A sincere man once stood on the beach shore watching, to his dismay, the waves thrashing a fish up and down, left and right. The man concluded that he must save the fish. He thrashed into the water and grabbed the fish by the tail. He then thrashed back to shore and threw the fish on the beach, satisfied that he had saved it from the water!

Dear brothers and sisters, when we work for the sake of Allah without knowledge of what the path of Allah is, many times we do as that young man did.

We are living in an age of information. We have lights in every corner of the house when only yesterday our ancestors read by the light of the moon. We have publishing houses when only yesterday our ancestors wrote the books they owned with their own hands. We have CD's to search the Hadeeth archives when our scholars spent days upon days searching for proof and evidence in their libraries. Shouldn't the knowledge increase with all this ease? It should. But it has not.

Dear brothers and sisters, we know that when a prize is great, the responsibility, and the work required for that prize shall also be great. And because of this, we see the enormous reward promised to those scholars and students of Islam due to the heavy work required.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, *"Whoever seeks out a path to acquire knowledge (of the deen), Allah makes easy a path for them to Jannah!"* - Muslim

Shaykh Abdur-Rahman As-Sa'dee said, *"Thus any path a person takes, whether physical or otherwise, something that will help them in acquiring knowledge of the Deen, they enter in the words of the Prophet, "Whoever seeks out a path to acquire knowledge (of the deen), Allah makes easy a path for them to Jannah." "*

Rasul Allah told us that when a person seeks out a path to learn about Islam, this is a sign that Allah loves them and that He wants good for them in this life and the next.

From Mu'aawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, the Prophet (pbuh) said, *"Whoever Allah wishes good for, he grants them Fiqh (understanding) of the Deen."*

And Rasul Allah told us that the sincere scholars have a place with Allah that no one else can reach, and that they are the inheritors of the Prophet's estate in passing it on to the world.

Rasul Allah said, *"The virtue of the scholar to a worshipper (Aabid) is similar to the virtue of the moon when it is full to the rest of the stars. And verily the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. Verily the Prophets did not leave behind dirhams and deenars, but rather they left behind knowledge. Thus whoever takes it, takes it as a bountiful share."* - Authentic, narrated by Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah.

The position of the people of Islamic knowledge reached such a level that Allah (Jalla Thanaa'uhu wa taqaddasat Asmaa'uhu) and the Angels pray for them!

From Abu Umaamah: Rasul Allah said, *"Verily Allah and His angels, even the ant in its hole and the fish in the sea, verily (they all) pray for he who teaches people good."* - authentic, narrated by Tabraanee.

Rasul Allah prayed for them also. He said, as narrated by Zayd ibn Thabit, *"May Allah grant light (and happiness and beauty in the face) of someone who hears a hadith from us and memorizes it until he passes it on to others!"* - authentic, narrated by Tirmidhi.

One of the Hadeeth scholars that Imam Bukhari took from, Hisham ibn Ammar narrates a story that happened to him when he was 8 years old. He says, *"My father sold a house of his for 20 Deenaars so that I could go for Hajj (and study Islam). When I arrived in Madinah, I went to the circle of Imam Maalik. He was sitting amongst his students like a king. People would ask him questions and he would answer. When I entered the crowd and my turn came up I said, 'Haddithnee (recite to me)!' He said, 'Rather you read.' I said, 'No, you haddithnee!' Imam Maalik said, 'No you read!' When I talked back and argued, he got angry and said to another student, go with this boy outside and smack him 15 times!' That student took me outside and smacked me 15 times with a stick and then brought me back to Imam Maalik. I said, 'You have Dhulm (wronged) me! My father sold his house so that I could come to you and be honored by listening to your teaching and seek knowledge from you. And you smacked me 15 times without any crime on my part, I shall not forgive you!' Imam Maalik then said, 'What is the expiation for this Dhulm (wronging)?' I said, 'You have to recite 15 Ahadeeth to me, that is the expiation.' So Imam Maalik began reciting the Ahadeeth to me until he completed 15. When he ended I told him, 'Beat me more and read more Hadeeth to me.'" Imam Maalik laughed and said, 'be off.'* - From the book Ma'rifat Al-Qurraa' al-Kibaar by Imam Adh-Dhahabi.

From the beginning of time, there has been a race between the doers of good and the doers of evil. Adam and Iblees, Musa and Fir'own, Muhammad and Abu Jahl. Today that race has not ended. Think: How hard are the doers of evil working and how hard are we?

Umar once said, *"I seek Allah's protection from Jalad (the strength and enthusiasm) of the sinner, and the laziness of the God-fearer."* Subhaan Allah, it is as if he is contemplating the time that we are now living in.

How can one of us be too lazy to pray 2 raka'at at night, when the people of the Dunya spend the entire night watching movies, some of which they have to read the translation on the bottom of the screen? How can we be too lazy to read for 2 hours, when the people of the Dunya - those who just want more money to continue their sin - spend days upon days of all-nighters studying for their

exams? Why do we cringe at paying 6 dollars for an Islamic book, when the people of the Dunya spend hundreds, rather thousands in pursuit of their sin?

What's wrong? What has happened to us?

Listen to those who came before us. Some Fuqahaa' said, "For years I desired to eat Hareesah (a sweet dish) and I wasn't able to because it was only sold during class time."

Imam Su'bah said, "If I ever saw someone running in the streets of the village I would only think one of two things: He was either crazy or a student of Hadeeth!"

And Ibn Al-Jowzee said, "I haven't seen a flaw more sad in the community than those who stop working even though they have the ability to continue."

How do we correct the situation dear brothers and sisters? Let us reflect on the following:

Firstly: We must be sincere in our desire to learn Islam. We are learning this Deen to rid ourselves, firstly, of ignorance and then to help others to rid themselves of ignorance.

Do you know the first Hadeeth in Sahih Bukhari, and in many many other Hadith books? It is not a coincidence that the first Hadeeth is: "*Verily Actions are (judged) by their intentions.*" The scholars are reminding us from the very beginning of our path to learning, from page one, that it must be for the sake of Allah.

Allah ordered us to be sincere to Him in what we do: "**And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith).**" Al Bayyinah, 5

Rasul Allah said, "*Whoever studies that which is meant for the sake of Allah, desiring only a piece of the Dunya, he shall not smell the fragrance of Jannah on the Day of Judgement.*" - authentic, narrated by Ahmad, and Tirmidhi.

Ibn Abbas said, "Verily a man shall be protected (by Allah) in proportion to his niyyah (intention for doing what it is he is doing)."

And this issue of intention is not an easy matter. Sufyan ath-Thowree said, "I have never nursed something more rebellious than my intentions." - from the book, Al-Ja'mi' li akhlaaq al-Raawee, by Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi.

Listen to the advice of Imam Ibn Jamaa'ah if you want to know what it takes to correct your intention, "A proper and sincere intention when studying Islam is to intend to win the pleasure of Allah by what you are doing. You should intend to practice what you learn, to resurrect the Shariah, hoping that this knowledge will

shine light on your heart, cleanse your soul, and bring you closer to Allah on the day of Judgement. Your intention for studying Islam should not be to win any worldly commodity, like leadership or fame or riches. It should not be learnt so that you can show off to your colleagues or so that people will revere you and sit you in a chief position in their gatherings, and so on." - from Imam Ibn Jamaa'ah's book, Tadhkirat as-Saami' wal Mutakallim.

Secondly: We should understand that we are in a continuous war with Shaytaan, and he does not want us to succeed in this studying. Allah ta'aala says, "**When thou does read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One.**" An-Nahl, 98

The Shaytaan shall sit in the face of every good thing that you try to do. Rasul Allah told us, *"The Shaytaan sits in the path (of every goodness) that the son of Aadam (may try to take). He sat in front of him when he took the path to Islam and told him, 'how could you leave the religion of your fathers and your fore-fathers?' But he disobeyed him and became Muslim. Then Shaytaan sat in front of him in his path to Hijrah and said, 'How could you leave your land and your sky?' But he disobeyed him and migrated (from Makkah). Then he sat in front of him in his path of Jihaad and said, 'Why should you do Jihad? It will only exhaust your wealth and body. You'll be killed, your wife will marry someone else, and your wealth will be divided (to others).'* But he disobeyed him and went for Jihad." Rasul Allah then said, *"Whoever does this, it is a duty upon Allah that He shall enter him into Jannah!"*

How will the Shaytaan sit in your face:

He will tell you to study tomorrow, and when tomorrow comes, study tomorrow. Procrastination is from the Shaytaan!

Shaytaan will tell you that you are busy now and that later in your life you shall take the time out to study Islam. After marriage, after graduation, after you get a job. Life shall pass and the 'after' shall live forever.

Shaytaan will tell you that the situation of the Ummah is lost and that you studying will not help anything, so don't waste your time. Combat this with what you've seen from the Jihad of knowledge and teaching that Rasul Allah and those that came before us did.

Shaytaan will tell you that there are enough scholars, they don't need you. Combat this with the fact that scholars shall die, and if the knowledge is not passed on to the next generation, it shall die in the community. There are 1.4 billion Muslims and the problem that always comes up is that there are not enough teachers and scholars. Everyone is a shepherd and everyone shall be responsible for his or her flock!

Thirdly: We should never forget to pray to Allah to bless us with His Mercy in succeeding in our intentions to learn Islam for His sake.

Allah ta'aala says **"When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me."** Surah Al-Baqarah, 186

Let us pray to Allah now to make this effort we are doing to learn His Deen, to learn His Shariah, sincere for His sake. And that He blesses us by His Mercy to succeed in what we intend. Verily, he has the Power to do anything.

Ameen.