

Class 2

'Knowledge, its Virtues & Rights'

KNOWLEDGE

Allaah created man and provided him with the tools for acquiring knowledge, namely hearing, sight and wisdom. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *“And Allâh has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allâh)”* [al-Nahl 16:78]

Islam is the religion of knowledge. The first aayah of the Qur’aan to be revealed enjoined reading which is the key to knowledge. Allaah says in Surah al-‘Alaq [96:1-5] (interpretation of the meaning):

- *“Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).*
- *He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).*
- *Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.*
- *Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.*
- *He has taught man that which he knew not”*

In Islam, knowledge comes before action; there can be no action without knowledge, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *“So know (O Muhammad) that Laa ilaaha ill-Allâh (none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh), and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for (the sin of) believing men and believing women”* [Muhammad 47:19]

Allaah warns every Muslim against speaking without knowledge, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): *“And follow not (O man, i.e., say not, or do not, or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart of each of those ones will be questioned (by Allâh)”* [al-Israa’ 17:36]

Virtue of Knowledge

Islam calls us to seek knowledge. The Messenger ﷺ made seeking knowledge an obligation upon every Muslim, and he explained that the superiority of the one who has knowledge over the one who merely worships is like the superiority of the moon over every other heavenly body. He said that the *‘scholars are the heirs of the Prophets’* and that the Prophets did not leave behind dinars and dirhams (i.e., money), rather their inheritance was knowledge, so whoever acquires it has gained a great share. And he ﷺ said that seeking knowledge is a way to Paradise. He ﷺ said: *“Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allaah will make a path to Paradise easy for him.”* (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-‘Ilm, 10)

Knowledge brings a great reward. The one who points the way to something good is like the one who does it. When the knowledgeable person dies, his reward with Allaah does not cease when he dies, rather it continues to increase so long as people benefit from his knowledge.

The Prophet ﷺ said: *“When a man dies, all his deeds come to an end except for three – an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous son who will pray for him.”* (Narrated by Muslim, 1631)

The one who spreads his knowledge among the people, he will have a reward like that of those who follow him. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Whoever calls people to right guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow him, without it detracting from their reward in the slightest, and whoever calls people to misguidance will have a burden of sin like that of those who follow him, without it detracting from their burden in the slightest.”* (Narrated by Muslim, 2674)

Islamic and Worldly Knowledge

Islam calls us to learn all kinds of beneficial knowledge. Branches of knowledge vary in status, the highest of which is knowledge of sharee’ah, then knowledge of medicine, then the other fields of knowledge.

Proper understanding of Islam is one of the best of good characteristics with which a Muslim may be honoured, The Prophet ﷺ said: *“When Allaah wishes good for a person, He makes him understand the religion.”* (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 69)

Concerning the matter of paying attention to the Qur’aan and learning and teaching it, the Messenger ﷺ said: *“The best of you is the one who learns the Qur’aan and teaches it.”* (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4639)

The ummah needs knowledgeable people at all times and in all places. A nation without knowledge and scholars will live in illusions and sink in darkness.

The Fatwa of the scholars who say that it is permissible to give zakaah to a seeker of worldly knowledge emphasises that a person is to seek both kind of knowledge as much as he can ofcourse giving precedence to Islamic Knowledge atleast enough to fulfil his obligations.

- Al-Mardaawi says in *al-Insaaaf* (3/218): Shaykh Taqiy al-Deen favoured the view that it is permissible to take zakaah in order to buy books that he needs including books of knowledge that is indispensable for his religious and worldly affairs. End quote. And this is the correct view. End quote.

The Muslims achieved great things in theoretical and practical spheres of knowledge, and other civilizations followed the Muslims in their progress and knowledge. Some prominent western universities still acknowledge this and teach it as part of their curricula.

The French philosopher Gustave le Bon stated in his book *The Civilization of the Arabs*: “We must bear in mind that the Arabs – and the Arabs alone – are the ones who guided us to the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans. European universities, including the University of Paris, based their curricula on

translations of their books for six hundred years and used their methods of research. The Islamic civilization was one of the most amazing that history has ever known". End quote.

We have seen how some western researchers have been fair towards the Muslims and their religion, and have acknowledged that the Muslims were pioneers in various fields of worldly science. There follow some of their comments so that we may see the position of Islam in relation to other civilizations, and understand how Islam urges its followers to look, ponder, strive and invent. We will quote comments from thinkers of different backgrounds.

1 – The French thinker Gustave le Bon says in his famous book *The Civilization of the Arabs* (translated into Arabic by 'Aadil Zu'aytar): If the Arabs had taken over France, then Paris would have become like Cordova in Spain, a centre of civilization and knowledge, where the man in the street was able to read and write, and even compose poetry, at a time when the kings of Europe did not even know how to write their names!

2 – The German Orientalist Sigrud Hoeneker said, concerning the spread of libraries in the Arab and Muslim world: *The libraries grew in every place like plants in good soil. In 891 CE a traveller put the number of public libraries in Baghdad as more than one hundred.*

3 – In the field of medicine and surgery, the Muslims played an undeniable role. The British writer H. G. Wells says in his book *Milestones in Human History*: They advanced in medicine far beyond the Greeks, they studied science and the functions of various parts of the body, and preventative medicine. Many of the treatment methods that they used are still used by us until today. They used anaesthetics for their operations and they used to perform some of the most difficult surgeries that are known. At a time when the church used to forbid the practice of medicine in the expectation that a full recovery could be achieved through religious rituals performed by the bishops, the Arabs had a true knowledge of medicine. End quote.

He also said: Every religion that is not suited to civilization should be rejected. I have not found any religion that is suited to civilization except Islam. End quote.

The testimonies are innumerable. We wanted to quote a few of them to show that non-Muslims have said the same as we say. All of those whom we have quoted pointed to the progress and success achieved by Muslims in material sciences, and leading mankind to advancement in many fields. Whilst the Muslims achieved distinction in these fields, they also achieved great things in the fields of religious sciences, worship and obedience to their Lord. The history of this religion bears witness to the great achievements in the field of writing books of shar'i (religious) knowledge, which is based on the Qur'aan and Sunnah (prophetic teachings). History also tells us of prominent figures whose worship and asceticism did not prevent them from being scholars in the religious or worldly sciences.

There are names of numerous Muslim scholars in many fields whose knowledge and progress cannot be denied except by one who is ignorant or arrogant, such as Ibn al-Nafees and al-Zahraawi in the field of medicine, Ibn al-Haytham in the field of vision and light, al-Khawaarizmi in the field of mathematics, and many, many others.

The intention plays a major part in anything we do, if we study the worldly sciences and strive towards it with the intention of helping the ummah or earning Halal income to provide your families and help your kith & kin the studies can also be an Ibadah.

LEARN, IMPLEMENT & SHARE

Knowledge mandates action, and action is to implement and not stop there rather preach and advise your brothers to do good.

Know, that it is compulsory for us to learn four issues:

1. Knowledge: it is knowing Allah, knowing His Messenger, and knowing the religion of Islam through the evidences.
2. Acting according to this knowledge.
3. Calling others to this knowledge.
4. Patience in the face of adversity that results from calling the people to it.

And the evidence for that is the saying of Allah ta'ala in Surah Al Asr:

- *"By the Time.*
- *Verily, Man is in loss.*
- *Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and exhorts one another to Truth, and exhorts one another to Patience and Constancy."*

Imam Ash-Shaafi, may Allah have mercy on him, said about these verses: *"If no argument besides this verse had been revealed by Allah to his creation, it would have been sufficient for them."*

There is no goodness in knowledge which is not confirmed by action, or words which are not confirmed by deeds as Allah says in *al-Saff (Ayahs 2 & 3)* .

- *"O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?"*
- *Most hateful it is with Allâh that you say that which you do not do"*

Also Allaah's Messenger said: *"The two feet of the servant will not cease (from standing before Allaah) on the Day of Judgement until he is asked about four things: On his life and how he spent it; On his knowledge and what he did for it; On his wealth and where he earned it and how he spent it; And on his body and in what way he utilized it."* (At Tirmidhi)

Hence it is essential for us to firstly Learn but also to implement and not just be content with doing good ourselves rather call others to do good and forbid evil.