

## Class 3

## ‘Etiquette &amp; Signs of Beneficial Knowledge’

## Etiquette Of Gaining Knowledge

There is a certain amount of etiquette for seeking knowledge which the seeker of knowledge should follow.

**1 – Patience**

My dear brothers & sisters, seeking knowledge (Islamic) is one of the highest of pursuits, and heights cannot be scaled except by working hard and striving, hence we need to do so with patience and perseverance. The same applies for worldly knowledge where one is seeking it for the Sake of Allah.

**2 – Purity of intention in action**

Adhere to purity of intention in what you do. Let your aim be to seek the pleasure of Allah and the Home of the Hereafter. Beware of showing off and the love of making oneself appear to be superior to one’s peers. The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: *“Whoever seeks knowledge in order to compete with the scholars or to prove himself superior to the ignorant or to make the people look up to him, Allaah will cause him to enter Hell.”* (narrated by al-Nasaa’i, 2654; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Nasaa’i).

To sum up, you have to be pure both outwardly and inwardly from every major and minor sin.

**3 – Acting upon what you know**

Know that acting upon what you know is the fruit of knowledge. Details we were studied in yesterday’s class. And worldly knowledge also says the same if one reads about what is healthy for us then he/she should try and implement it in life.

**4 – Have Taqwa of Allah**

You must always be aware that Allaah is watching you, in secret and in the open. Your attitude towards your Lord must always be balanced between fear and hope, which for the Muslims are like the two wings of a bird. Turn to Allaah wholeheartedly and let your heart be filled with love for Him, your tongue with remembrance of Him (dhikr). Be happy and rejoice in His rulings and His wisdom.

Always call upon Allaah (du’aa’) in every sujood, asking Him to bless you and grant you beneficial knowledge, for if you are sincere towards Allaah, He will support you and help you, and will cause you to attain the level of the righteous scholars.

**5 – Make the best use of time**

Make the most of your youth and your whole life by learning. Do not be deceived by procrastination and wishful thinking about the future. Every hour of your life that passes cannot be replaced. Do away with whatever you can of distractions and obstacles which prevent you from striving your utmost to attain knowledge. It was a common practice of the Righteous predecessors to distance themselves from their home and family so for the sake of knowledge so that they are not distracted. Allaah has

not given man two hearts in his chest, and similarly it is said that knowledge will not give you a part of it until you give it your all.

### 6 – Be cautious when choosing the source of knowledge

Both in the search of worldly and Islamic knowledge one should be careful as to where he/she is taking it from, when choosing a school or university we try to check if there are Muslims around and would it be easy to perform our obligations like prayers etc. And about seeking Islamic knowledge beware of being preoccupied in the beginning with the disputes among the scholars, or among people in general, because this confuses the mind.

### 7 – Practice what you learn in your daily life

Continually repeat what you learn and try to use it or discuss about it in your daily life each day. This helps one remember.

### 8 – Studying books

One should try to obtain as many of the books you need as you can, because they are the tools of learning. Reading books gives more insight and helps us understand things in different ways. Strive to read books about your subject of interest and about the great works of the scholars. Reading books is a habit that we should try and instil in our kids from the time they are young.

### 9 – Choosing companions

Strive to choose righteous friends who are preoccupied with seeking knowledge and are of a good nature, who can help you in achieving your aim, add to the benefits you have already gained, encourage you to seek more knowledge and stop you from feeling bored and tired; friends who are religiously-committed, trustworthy and of good character, who are sincere towards Allaah and who are not merely messing about.

### 10 – Good manners towards the Teachers & asking the right Questions

Knowledge cannot be gained only from books; you must also have shaykhs (teachers) whom you trust to open the door to knowledge and keep you from making mistakes. So you must have good manners towards them, for this is the way to success, learning and strength. So you must honour, respect and be polite to the shaykhs/teachers. Observe the utmost standards of etiquette when you sit with your shaykhs/teachers and speak with them. Ask questions in a proper manner and listen attentively. If you think that the shaykh/teacher has made a mistake, do not let that make him lose respect in your eyes, because that will deprive you of his knowledge. Who is there who is entirely free from error?

### 11 – Finally asking Allah to grant us of Beneficial Knowledge

Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah (d.728 A.H.) -Rahimullaah- said: ‘The reality of the issue is that a slave of Allaah is in dire need of asking someone for knowledge and guidance, seeking and asking, then he remembers Allaah and of his dire need of Allaah, then Allaah guides and shows him. Just as Allaah said: O My worshippers! All of you are astray except the one whom I have guided, so seek guidance from Me and I will guide you.’ [Collected by Muslim]

Below we study some Duas from the The Quran & Sunnah asking for increase in knowledge.

## DUA FOR INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE

1.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

'Rabbi Zidni Ilma'

O my Lord increase me in knowledge

2 – Umm Salma –Radhi Allaahu anha– said, the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ used to say in the supplication in the morning prayer:

اللهم إني أسألك علماً نافعاً، ورزقاً طيباً، وعملاً متقبلاً

'Allaahumma innee assaluka ilman nafia, wa rizzqan tayyeebun, wa amalan mutaqaabilan,.'

'O Allaah indeed I ask You for beneficial knowledge, and a good Halal provision, and actions which are accepted.' [Collected by Tayalisee, Tabraani & regarded Hasan by Hafidh Ibn Hajr]

3 – From Anas bin Malik – Radi Allaahu anhu – that he heard the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ supplicating:

اللهم انفعني بما علمتني وعلمي ما ينفعني وارزقني علماً تنفعني به

Allahumman fa'nee bi-maa 'allam-ta-nee wa 'allim-nee maa yanfa'u-nee war zuq-nee 'ilman yanfa'u-nee

'O Allaah benefit me with what You have taught me, and teach me that which will benefit me, and grant me knowledge which will benefit me.' [Collected by al-Hakim, Bayhaqi, Tabraani & authenticated by Albaani in Silsilah No. 3151]

4 –

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

O our Lord give us good in this Dunyaa, and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of the fire [2:201]

Al-Hasan said: 'al-Hasana (good) in the Dunyaa is knowledge and worship, and in the Hereafter it is Paradise.'

Sufyan said: 'al-Hasana (good) in the Dunyaa is knowledge and good provision, and in the Hereafter Paradise.'

5 – Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Jafar said: 'I heard Ibn Khuzaimah while he was asked: 'Where did you get this knowledge from?'

He answered: 'The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said:

ماء زمزم لما شرب له

*'Zam Zam water is what it is drunk for.'*

So, when I would drink Zam Zam water I would ask Allaah for beneficial knowledge.' [From: 'Tadhkiratul Huffadh' 2/721]

Al-Hakim said: 'I drank Zam Zam water and I asked Allaah that he grant me the ability to compile works of books in a good way.' [From: 'Tadhkiratul Huffadh' 3/1044]

## SIGNS OF BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE

Everything has its indications and signs. Indications that knowledge is beneficial are that it leads to fine character, good manners and praiseworthy attributes. This is common in terms of worldly and Islamic knowledge, a learned person is that who is of good character, who is confident of himself and isn't insecure so he/she helps others grow as well.

In regard to Islamic knowledge it was said: *"He whose knowledge doesn't cause him to weep, can be justifiably considered not to have been granted beneficial knowledge"*, since Allah described the people of knowledge saying:

*"Say believe in it (the Qur'an) or do not believe. Verily! Those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration. And they say, 'Glory be to our Lord! Truly, the Promise of our Lord must be fulfilled.' And they fall down on their faces weeping and it adds to their humility."* [Al-Qur'an 17:107-109]

Thus knowledge carries its possessor towards humility, prostration, crying, calling oneself to account and truthfulness with Allah.

Indeed crying is the clearest sign and best proof of the knowledge one possesses and of a person's truthfulness. What is the benefit of knowledge a person learns, if it doesn't lead him to crying, humbleness, penitence and good dealings with the people?

Is not the possessor of knowledge one who knows most about his Lord? Has he not read about His Exalted, Perfect, Lofty Attributes that which causes his heart to humble and his eyes to shed tears? Has he not read in the Book of Allah and in the sayings of the Messenger of Allah, ﷺ, texts pertaining to the Fire, the terror in the grave and the fearful accounts of the Resurrection because of which mountains are humbled out of the fear of Allah?

## SIGNS OF NON-BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE

### 1. Do not Practice

Knowledge mandates actions as we studied in yesterday's class but those who learn and preach but do not practice there are serious warnings in Quran & Sunnah against them

Allah says *"Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do"* (61:3)

Rasoolullah ﷺ said: *'A man will be brought and put in the hell fire and he will circumambulate (go round and round) in the hell fire like a donkey of a (flour grinding mill), and all the people of the hell fire will gather around him and will say to him, 'O so-and-so! Didn't you use to order others for Al-Ma'roof and forbid them from Al-Munkar?'*

The man will say, *'I used to order others to do Al-Ma'roof (Islamic monotheism and all that is good) but myself never used to do it, and I used to forbid others from Al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief, and all that is evil) while I myself used to do Al-Munkar'*" (Bukhari)

The Messenger of Allaah also said: *"The example of one who teaches the people good yet forgets himself, is like the example of a torch that sheds light for people yet burns itself out."* (Tabrani)

### 2. It Breeds haughtiness, pride and arrogance

How many times do we see that shaytaan is able to trick a person to be arrogant about the knowledge he has and hence he becomes rude with others and thinks of himself to be better and above others. This sadly is valid for both people with worldly or Islamic knowledge. Although Islamic knowledge does give a person an honourable position but that should never make him arrogant which the Shaytaan would use and make him commit mistakes.

### 3. It causes one to seek elevation in the worldly life

Vanity, power and position is great weapon of Shaytaan he makes people love it so much that a lot of the times they end up compromising on their morals and more importantly on their religion. This age is a perfect example to it where we see a lot of speakers who try to vow their audience by telling them what they would like to hear losing focus of what should be told.

### 4. Getting into Arguments

Arguments are disliked, discussions are welcome but we see so many times that people just get into arguments and then we see their rage taking over them and shaytaan makes them say things that are not even facts just so that they win the argument.

We see these days that a lot of people are searching the internet or trying to learn things just so that they can win over arguments. If the intention is to advice and guide people then arguments would never get them anywhere it can only cause harm.

Al-Awzaa'ee said: *“When Allaah desires evil for a people, He opens the door of argumentation for them and prevents them from (doing good) deeds.”*

Ma'roof bin Fayrooz Al-Kurkhee said: *“When Allaah intends good for a servant, He opens for him the door of actions and closes for him the door of argumentation. And when Allaah intends evil for a servant, He opens for him the door of argumentation and closes for him the door of actions.”*

## 5. Openly claims to have a close relationship with Allaah,

Openly and repeatedly claiming of being pious is a bad sign and is usually for personal benefits. The same applies to the worldly knowledge, the one who has knowledge wouldn't just go around saying I am very educated etc he would show his knowledge in action.

'Umar said: *“Whoever says he is knowledgeable is really ignorant”*.

So compare your position to this – may Allah have mercy upon us – and don't forget the virtuous saying, *“He who's knowledge doesn't cause him to weep, can be justifiably considered not to have been granted beneficial knowledge.”*

We conclude by a small poetry by Muhammad bin Abee 'Alee Al-Asbahaanee who said:

*“Act upon your knowledge and you will profit, O man*

*Knowledge doesn't benefit so long as one doesn't perfect his actions*

*Knowledge is beauty and Taqwaa (Fear) of Allaah is its decoration*

*Those with Taqwaa are always preoccupied with their knowledge*

*The proof of Allaah, O possessor of knowledge, is immense*

*Neither plotting nor scheming concerning it is of any use*

*Acquire knowledge and perform deeds as much as you can*

*And do not let vain pastimes and argumentation distract you*

*Team the people and always make it your goal to benefit them*

*And beware, beware of fatigue and weariness overtaking you*

*Admonish your brother with gentleness when he makes a mistake*

*For knowledge is affectionate with those who are overcome by errors*

*And if you are amidst a people that have no religious morals  
Then command them to do good when they act ignorantly (i.e. sin)  
And if they disobey you, then remind them without getting annoyed  
And be patient, strive in patience and do not let their actions worry you  
For every goat is attached to its two feet  
Have patience whether they are oppressive or fair.”*