

أَهْمِيَّةُ الْعِلْمِ

The knowledge

All praise be to Allah (swt) the Lord of the worlds, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful, and His peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions, and who ever follow him till the Day of Judgment.

Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an:

"اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾" (سُورَةُ الْعَلَقِ: ٩٦، الْآيَاتُ: ١-٥).

“Read with the name of your Lord who created (everything), (1) He created man from a clot of blood. (2) Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, (3) Who imparted knowledge by means of the pen. (4) He taught man what he did not know (5).” (Surah Al-Alaq: 96, Verses: 1-5).

The first word revealed in the Holy Qur'an is the word “Read” or “Proclaim”. This shows to what extent the Islamic faith has always been concerned with knowledge.

The verses of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (saws) express the attitude of Islam toward the pursuit of knowledge and education are numerous .

Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an:

"...وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾" (سُورَةُ طه ٢٠، الْآيَةُ: ١١٤).

“...And say, “My Lord, improve me in knowledge (114).” (Surah Ta-Ha: 20, Verse: 114).

Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an:

"...قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾" (سُورَةُ الزُّمَرِ: ٣٩، الْآيَةُ: ٩).

“...Say, “Can those who know and those who do not know become equal?” It is only the people of understanding who are receptive of the advice (9).” (Surah Az-Zumar: 39, Verse: 9).

Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an:

"...يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾" (سُورَةُ الْمُجَادَلَةِ: ٥٨، الْآيَةُ: ١١).

“...Allah will raise those, in ranks, who have believed and are given knowledge. Allah is well-aware of what you do (11).” (Surah Al-Mujadilah: 58, Verse: 11).

Allah (swt) said in the Holy Qur'an:

“...إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢٨﴾” (سُورَةُ فَاطِرٍ: ٣٥، آيَةُ: ٢٨).

“...Only those of His slaves fear Allah who are knowledgeable. Surely Allah is Mighty, Forgiving (28).” (Surah Fatir: 35, Verse: 28).

The Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (saws) has also repeatedly stressed the importance of knowledge .

Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ، وَوَضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ كَمُقْلِدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ ". (سُنَنِ ابْنِ مَاجَةَ: ٢٢٩).
" طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ " صَحِيحٌ، وَ" وَوَضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ كَمُقْلِدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ " ضَعِيفٌ جِدًّا.¹

Narrated by Anas bin Malik (ra) that Allah's Messenger (saws) said: “Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim, and he who imparts knowledge to those who do not deserve it, is like one who puts a necklace of jewels, pearls and gold around the neck of swines.” (Sunan Ibn Majah: 229). The part of the Hadith “Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim” is Sahih, but other part is very Dhaif.¹

Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَاللَّهُ الْمُعْطِي وَأَنَا الْقَاسِمُ، وَلَا تَزَالُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ، حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ ظَاهِرُونَ ". (صَحِيحُ الْبُخَارِيِّ: ٣١١٦).²

Narrated by Mu'awiya (ra) that Allah's Messenger (saws) said: “If Allah wants to do good for somebody, He makes him comprehend the Religion (i.e. Islam), and Allah is the Giver and I am Al-Qasim (i.e. the distributor), and this (Muslim)

¹ سُنَنِ ابْنِ مَاجَةَ: الْمُقَدَّمَةُ، ٣٩- بَابُ فَضْلِ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَالْحَتِّ عَلَى طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ، رَفَعُ الْحَدِيثِ: ٢٢٩، قَالَ الْأَلْبَانِيُّ: " طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ " صَحِيحٌ، وَ" وَوَضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ كَمُقْلِدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ " ضَعِيفٌ جِدًّا، وَزِيَادَةُ " وَمُسْلِمَةٌ " لَا أَصْلَ لَهَا أَلْبَانِيَّةً، وَأَمَّا زِيَادَةُ: " اَطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ وَلَوْ بِالصَّيْنِ " فَبَاطِلَةٌ.

² صَحِيحُ الْبُخَارِيِّ: ٥٧- كِتَابُ فَرَضِ الْحُمْسِ، ٧- بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: " فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ حُمْسَهُ "، رَفَعُ الْحَدِيثِ: ٣١١٦

nation will remain victorious over their opponents, till Allah's Order comes and they will still be victorious.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari: 3116).²

Prophet Muhammad (saws) said:

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا، سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا مِنْ طُرُقِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ، وَإِنَّ الْعَالِمَ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ، وَالْحَيَاتَانِ فِي جَوْفِ الْمَاءِ، وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ، وَإِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُورَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ، فَمَنْ أَخَذَهُ أَخَذَ بِحِطِّ وَافِرٍ". (سُنَنِ أَبِي دَاوُدَ: ٣٦٤٣). هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ.³

Narrated by Abud Darda (ra) that I heard Allah's Messenger (saws) says: If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither Dinar nor Dirham, leave only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion.” (Sunan Abi Dawud: 3643). This Hadith is Sahih.³

Knowledge is central to the Islamic faith because it should be built on unshaken certainty and convictions which could not be attained without knowledge. Faith in Allah (swt) itself is an ever-revealing source of knowledge, and a spiritual insight into countless fields of thought. Nature and the whole universe are open and ever-revealing treasures of knowledge and truth, and the Holy Qur'an was the first book to point to these rich sources of knowledge .

Devotion to true knowledge is regarded by Islam as a devotion to Allah (swt). The most essential knowledge, which a Muslim should seek before everything else, is the correct understanding of reality and the teachings of Islam, for upon this knowledge all his life and deeds depends. This has been the reason that the word “read” was firmly attached to the name of Allah (swt) and His creation.

However, secular knowledge is also important and should not be neglected. The two branches of knowledge of spiritual matters and of the world's life should be

³ سُنَنِ أَبِي دَاوُدَ: ٢٦- كِتَابُ الْعِلْمِ، ١- بَابُ الْحَتِّ عَلَى طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ، رَفَعُ الْحَدِيثِ: ٣٦٤٣، قَالَ الْأَلْبَانِيُّ: هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ.

studied and mastered side by side each supplementing and complementing the other. However, there are various types of knowledge inspired by Satan which Muslims are not permitted to learn or engage in, such as magic, fortune-telling, gambling or anything related to immorality, or wickedness. A Muslim is also assuredly allowed to acquire the knowledge of science, technology, and the like from non-Muslim sources, but he is not permitted to acquire together with this knowledge the values and behavior which are not ruled by a strict sense of accountability to Allah (swt). Rather, he is to subject whatever practical and scientific knowledge he acquires to the Islamic criteria and value-system, to apply whatever is appropriate and beneficial toward the building of an Islamic society governed by the laws of Allah (swt) in all aspects of life. He leaves alone whatever is not appropriate. It is also a duty of those who have knowledge to impart it to the others. Thus, the diffusion and search for knowledge becomes a religious duty and an act of worship provided that is attached to the knowledge of Allah (swt).

We pray Allah (swt) that He guides us to follow the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (saws) in our daily life, and give us success in this world and the Hereafter.

¹ Sunan Ibn Majah: Introduction, 39-Chapter: Preferred scientists and urge the application of science, Hadith no. 229. Al-Albani: "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim" is Sahih, other is very Dhaif.

² Sahih Al-Bukhari: 57-Book: One-fifth of booty to the cause of Allah, 7- Chapter: The Statement of Allah (swt): "Verily one-fifth of it is assigned to Allah and to the Messenger (saws), Hadith no. 3116.

³ Sunan Abi Dawud: 26-Book: The knowledge, 1- Chapter: Regarding the virtue of knowledge, Hadith No. 3643. Al-Albani: This Hadith is Sahih.